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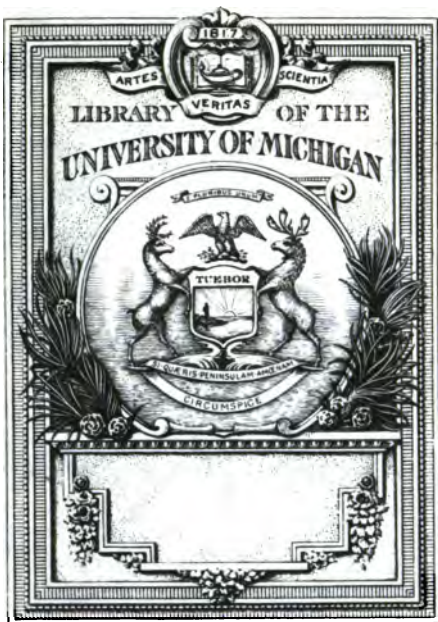
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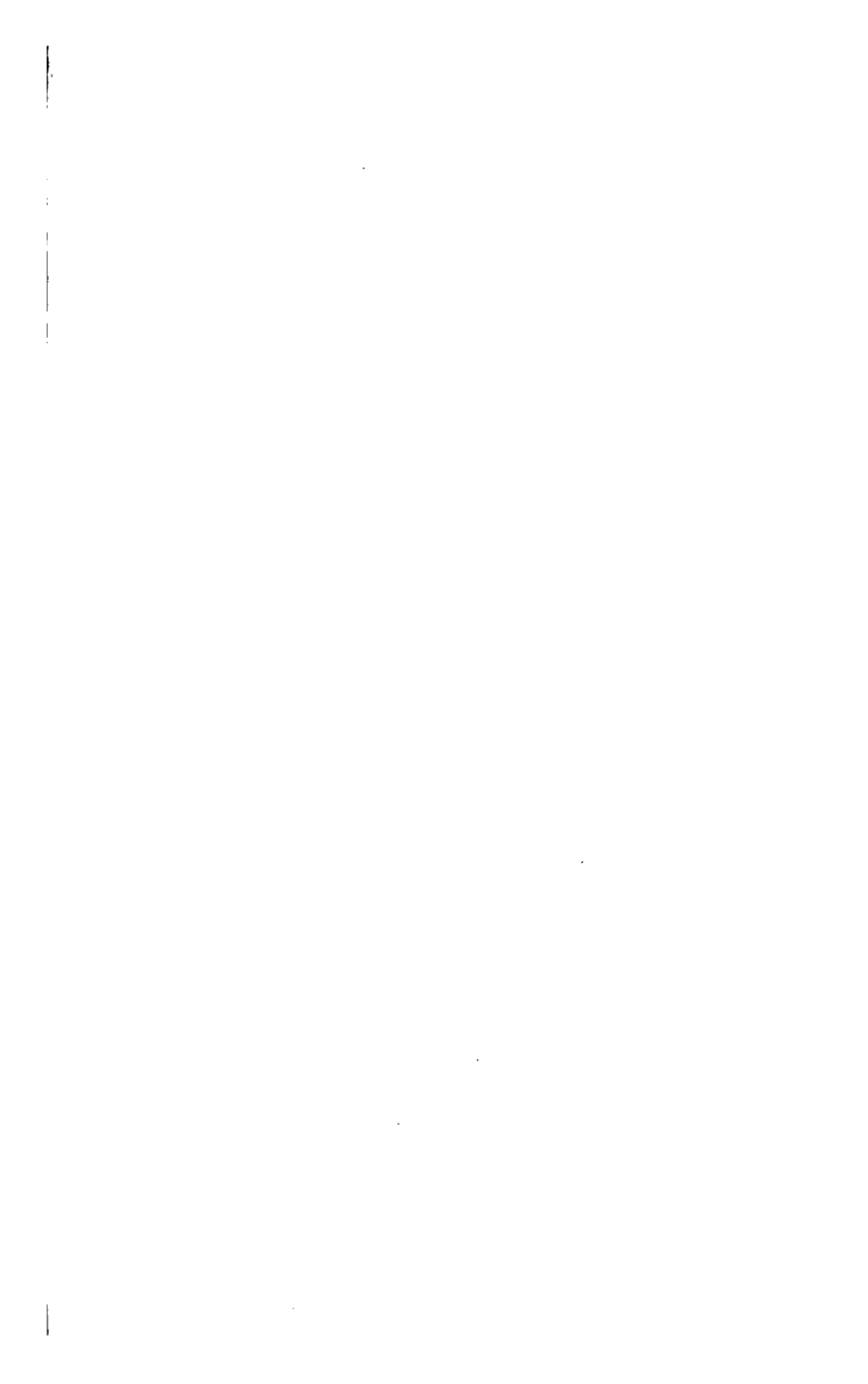
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POEMS

11476

B.G.

P O E M S

BY

A L F R E D T E N N Y S O N ,
P O E T L A U R E A T E .

I N T W O V O L U M E S .

V O L . I I .

A N E W E D I T I O N .

B O S T O N :
T I C K N O R A N D F I E L D S .
M D C C C L X I I I .



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POEMS.

THE TALKING OAK.

I.

ONCE more the gate behind me falls,
Once more before my face
I see the mouldered Abbey-walls,
That stand within the chace.

II.

Beyond the lodge the city lies,
Beneath its drift of smoke ;
And ah ! with what delighted eyes
I turn to yonder oak !

III.

For when my passion first began,
Ere that which in me burned,
The love that makes me thrice a man,
Could hope itself returned ;

IV.

To yonder oak within the field
I spoke without restraint,
And with a larger faith appealed
Than Papist unto Saint.

V.

For oft I talked with him apart,
And told him of my choice,
Until he plagiarized a heart,
And answered with a voice.

VI.

Though what he whispered under Heaven
None else could understand ;
I found him garrulously given,
A babbler in the land.

VII.

But since I heard him make reply
Is many a weary hour ;
'T were well to question him, and try
If yet he keeps the power.

VIII.

Hail, hidden to the knees in fern,
Broad oak of Sumner-chace,
Whose topmost branches can discern
The roofs of Sumner-place !

IX.

Say thou, whereon I carved her name,
If ever maid or spouse,
As fair as my Olivia, came
To rest beneath thy boughs ?—

X.

“ O Walter, I have sheltered here
Whatever maiden grace
The good old Summers, year by year,
Made ripe in Sumner-chace :

XI.

“ Old Summers, when the monk was fat,
And, issuing shorn and sleek,
Would twist his girdle tight, and pat
The girls upon the cheek,

XII.

“ Ère yet, in scorn of Peter's-pence,
And numbered bead, and shrift,
Bluff Harry broke into the spence,
And turned the cowls adrift :

XIII.

“ And I have seen some score of those
Fresh faces, that would thrive
When his man-minded offset rose
To chase the deer at five ;

XIV.

“ And all that from the town would stroll
Till that wild wind made work,
In which the gloomy brewer's soul
Went by me, like a stork :

XV.

"The slight she-slips of loyal blood,
And others, passing praise,
Strait-laced, but all-too-full in bud
For puritanic stays :

XVI.

"And I have shadowed many a group
Of beauties, that were born
In teacup-times of hood and hoop,
Or while the patch was worn ;

XVII.

"And, leg and arm with love-knots gay,
About me leaped and laughed
The modish Cupid of the day,
And shrilled his tinsel shaft.

XVIII.

"I swear (and else may insects prick
Each leaf into a gall)
This girl, for whom your heart is sick.
Is three times worth them all ;

XIX.

“For those and theirs, by Nature’s law
Have faded long ago;
But in these latter springs I saw
Your own Olivia blow,

XX.

“From when she gambolled on the greens,
A baby-germ, to when
The maiden blossoms of her teens
Could number five from ten.

XXI.

“I swear, by leaf, and wind, and rain,
(And hear me with thine ears,)
That, though I circle in the grain
Five hundred rings of years —

XXII.

“Yet, since I first could cast a shade,
Did never creature pass
So slightly, musically made,
So light upon the grass :

XXIII.

“For as to fairies, that will flit
To make the greensward fresh,
I hold them exquisitely knit,
But far too spare of flesh.”

XXIV.

O, hide thy knotted knees in fern.
And overlook the chace;
And from thy topmost branch discern
The roofs of Sumner-place.

XXV.

But thou, whereon I carved her name
That oft hast heard my vows,
Declare when last Olivia came
To sport beneath thy boughs.

XXVI.

“O yesterday, you know, the fair
Was holden at the town;
Her father left his good arm-chair:
And rode his hunter down.

XXVII.

“ And with him Albert came on his.

I looked at him with joy :

As cowslip unto oxlip is,

So seems she to the boy.

XXVIII.

“ An hour had past — and, sitting straight

Within the low-wheeled chaise,

Her mother trundled to the gate

Behind the dappled grays.

XXIX.

“ But, as for her, she staid at home,

And on the roof she went,

And down the way you use to come

She looked with discontent.

XXX.

“ She left the novel half-uncut

Upon the rosewood shelf ;

She left the new piano shut :

She could not please herself.

XXXI.

“ Then ran she, gamesome as the colt,
And livelier than a lark
She sent her voice through all the holt
Before her, and the park.

XXXII.

“ A light wind chased her on the wing,
And in the chase grew wild,
As close as might be would he cling
About the darling child :

XXXIII.

“ But light as any wind that blows
So fleetly did she stir,
The flower, she touched on, dipt and rose,
And turned to look at her.

XXXIV.

“ And here she came, and round me played,
And sang to me the whole
Of those three stanzas that you made
About my ‘ giant bole ;’

XXXV.

“ And in a fit of frolic mirth
She strove to span my waist :
Alas, I was so broad of girth,
I could not be embraced.

XXXVI.

“ I wished myself the fair young beech
That here beside me stands,
That round me, clasping each in each,
She might have locked her hands.

XXXVII.

“ Yet seemed the pressure thrice as sweet
As woodbine’s fragile hold,
Or when I feel about my feet
The berried briony fold.”

XXXVIII.

O muffle round thy knees with fern,
And shadow Sumner-chace !
Long may thy topmost branch discern
The roofs of Sumner-place !

XXXIX.

But tell me, did she read the name
I carved with many vows,
When last with throbbing heart I came
To rest beneath thy boughs ?

XL.

“ O yes; she wandered round and round
These knotted knees of mine,
And found, and kissed the name she found,
And sweetly murmured thine.

XLI.

“ A tear-drop trembled from its source,
And down my surface crept.
My sense of touch is something coarse,
But I believe she wept.

XLII.

“ Then flushed her cheek with rosy light,
She glanced across the plain ;
But not a creature was in sight :
She kissed me once again.

XLIII.

“ Her kisses were so close and kind,
That, trust me on my word,
Hard wood I am, and wrinkled rind,
But yet my sap was stirred :

XLIV.

“ And even into my inmost ring
A pleasure I discerned,
Like those blind motions of the Spring,
That show the year is turned.

XLV.

“ Thrice-happy he that may caress
The ringlet's waving balm —
The cushions of whose touch may press
The maiden's tender palm.

XLVI.

“ I, rooted here among the groves,
But languidly adjust
My vapid vegetable loves
With anthers and with dust :

XLVII.

“ For ah! the Dryad-days were brief
Whereof the poets talk,
When that, which breathes within the leaf,
Could slip its bark and walk.

XLVIII.

“ But could I, as in times foregone,
From spray, and branch, and stem,
Have sucked and gathered into one
The life that spreads in them,

XLIX.

“ She had not found me so remiss;
But lightly issuing through,
I would have paid her kiss for kiss
With usury thereto.”

L.

O flourish high, with leafy towers,
And overlook the lea,
Pursue thy loves among the bowers,
But leave thou mine to me.

LI.

O flourish, hidden deep in fern,
Old oak, I love thee well ;
A thousand thanks for what I learn
And what remains to tell.

LII.

“T is little more : the day was warm ;
At last, tired out with play,
She sank her head upon her arm,
And at my feet she lay.

LIII.

“Her eyelids dropped their silken eaves.
I breathed upon her eyes
Through all the summer of my leaves
A welcome mixed with sighs.

LIV.

“I took the swarming sound of life —
The music from the town —
The whispers of the drum and fife,
And lulled them in my own.

LV.

“ Sometimes I let a sunbeam slip,
To light her shaded eye ;
A second fluttered round her lip
Like a golden butterfly ;

LVI.

• “ A third would glimmer on her neck
To make the necklace shine ;
Another slid, a sunny fleck,
From head to ankle fine.

LVII.

“ Then close and dark my arms I spread,
And shadowed all her rest —
Dropt dews upon her golden head,
An acorn in her breast.

LVIII.

“ But in a pet she started up,
And plucked it out, and drew
My little oakling from the cup,
And flung him in the dew.

LIX.

“And yet it was a graceful gift —
I felt a pang within
As when I see the woodman lift
His axe to slay my kin.

LX.

“I shook him down because he was •
The finest on the tree.
He lies beside thee on the grass.
O kiss him once for me !

LXI.

“O kiss him twice and thrice for me,
That have no lips to kiss,
For never yet was oak on lea
Shall grow so fair as this.”

LXII.

Step deeper yet in herb and fern,
Look further through the chace,
Spread upward till thy boughs discern
The front of Sumner-place.

LXIII.

This fruit of thine by Love is blest,
That but a moment lay
Where fairer fruit of Love may rest
Some happy future day.

LXIV.

I kiss it twice, I kiss it thrice,
The warmth it thence shall win
To riper life may magnetize
The baby-oak within.

LXV.

But thou, while kingdoms overset,
Or lapse from hand to hand,
Thy leaf shall never fail, nor yet
Thine acorn in the land.

LXVI.

May never saw dismember thee,
Nor wielded axe disjoint;
Thou art the fairest spoken tree
From here to Lizard point.

LXVII.

O rock upon thy towery top
All throats that gurgle sweet!
All starry culmination drop
Balm-dews to bathe thy feet!

LXVIII.

All grass of silky feather grow—
And while he sinks or swells
The full south-breeze around thee blow
The sound of minster bells.

LXIX.

The fat earth feed thy branchy root,
That under deeply strikes!
The northern morning o'er thee shoot,
High up, in silver spikes!

LXX.

Nor ever lightning char thy grain,
But, rolling as in sleep,
Low thunders bring the mellow rain,
That makes thee broad and deep!

LXXI.

And hear me swear a solemn oath,
That only by thy side
Will I to Olive plight my troth,
And gain her for my bride.

LXXII.

And when my marriage-morn may fall,
She, Dryad-like, shall wear
Alternate leaf and acorn-ball
In wreath about her hair.

LXXIII.

And I will work in prose and rhyme,
And praise thee more in both
Than bard has honored beech or lime,
Or that Thessalian growth

LXXIV.

In which the swarthy ringdove sat,
And mystic sentence spoke ;
And more than England honors that,
Thy famous brother-oak.

LXXV.

Wherein the younger Charles abode
Till all the paths were dim,
And far below the Roundhead rode,
And hummed a surly hymn.

LOVE AND DUTY.

Of love that never found his earthly close,
What sequel? Streaming eyes and breaking hearts?
Or all the same as if he had not been?

Not so. Shall Error in the round of time
Still father Truth? O, shall the braggart shout
For some blind glimpse of freedom work itself
Through madness, hated by the wise, to law
System and empire? Sin itself be found
The cloudy porch oft opening on the Sun?
And only he, this wonder, dead, become
Mere highway dust? or year by year alone
Sit brooding in the ruins of a life,
Nightmare of youth, the spectre of himself?

If this were thus, if this, indeed, were all,
Better the narrow brain, the stony heart,
The staring eye glazed o'er with sapless days,

The long mechanic paces to and fro,
 The set gray life, and apathetic end.
 But am I not the nobler through thy love?
 O three times less unworthy! likewise thou
 Art more through Love, and greater than thy years.
 The Sun will run his orbit, and the Moon
 Her circle. Wait, and Love himself will bring
 The drooping flower of knowledge changed to fruit
 Of wisdom. Wait: my faith is large in Time,
 And that which shapes it to some perfect end.

Will some one say, then why not ill for good?
 Why took ye not your pastime? To that man
 My work shall answer, since I knew the right
 And did it; for a man is not as God,
 But then most Godlike being most a man.

— So let me think 't is well for thee and me —
 Ill-fated that I am, what lot is mine
 Whose foresight preaches peace, my heart so slow
 To feel it! For how hard it seemed to me,
 When eyes, love-languid through half-tears, would dwell
 One earnest, earnest moment upon mine,
 Then not to dare to see! when thy low voice,
 Faltering, would break her syllables, to keep
 My own full-tuned, — hold passion in a leash,
 And not leap forth and fall about thy neck,

And on thy bosom, (deep-desired relief!)
Rain out the heavy mist of tears, that weighed
Upon my brain, my senses and my soul!

For Love himself took part against himself
To warn us off, and Duty loved of Love —
O this world's curse — beloved but hated — came
Like Death betwixt thy dear embrace and mine,
And crying, "Who is this? behold thy bride,"
She pushed me from thee.

If the sense is hard
To alien ears, I did not speak to these —
No, not to thee, but to thyself in me:
Hard is my doom and thine: thou knowest it all.

Could love part thus? was it not well to speak,
To have spoken once? It could not but be well.
The slow sweet hours that bring us all things good,
The slow sad hours that bring us all things ill,
And all good things from evil, brought the night
In which we sat together and alone,
And to the want, that hollowed all the heart,
Gave utterance by the yearning of an eye,
That burned upon its object through such tears
As flow but once a life.

The trance gave way
To those caresses, when a hundred times

In that last kiss, which never was the last,
Farewell, like endless welcome, lived and died.
Then followed counsel, comfort, and the words
That make a man feel strong in speaking truth ;
Till now the dark was worn, and overhead
The lights of sunset and of sunrise mixed
In that brief night ; the summer night, that paused
Among her stars to hear us ; stars that hung
Love-charmed to listen : all the wheels of Time
Spun round in station, but the end had come.

O then like those, who clench their nerves to rush
Upon their dissolution, we two rose,
There — closing like an individual life —
In one blind cry of passion and of pain,
Like bitter accusation even to death,
Caught up the whole of love and uttered it,
And bade adieu forever.

Live — yet live —
Shall sharpest pathos blight us, knowing all
Life needs for life is possible to will —
Live happy ! tend thy flowers : be tended by
My blessing ! should my shadow cross thy thoughts
Too sadly for their peace, so put it back
For calmer hours in memory's darkest hold,
I unforgotten ! should it cross thy dreams,

So might it come like one that looks content,
• With quiet eyes unfaithful to the truth,
And point thee forward to a distant light,
Or seem to lift a burthen from thy heart
• And leave thee freer, till thou wake refreshed,
Then when the first low matin-chime hath grown
Full quire, and morning driven her plow of pearl
Far furrowing into light the mounded rack,
Beyond the fair green field and eastern sea.

THE GOLDEN YEAR.

WELL, you shall have that song which Leonard wrote :
It was last summer on a tour in Wales :
Old James was with me : we that day had been
Up Snowdon ; and I wished for Leonard there,
And found him in Llanberis ; and that same song
He told me ; for I bantered him, and swore
They said he lived shut up within himself,
A tongue-tied Poet in the feverous days,
That, setting the *how much* before the *how*,
Cry like the daughters of the horse-leech, "give,
Cram us with all," but count not me the herd !

To which, "They call me what they will," he said :
"But I was born too late : the fair new forms
That float about the threshold of an age,
Like truths of Science waiting to be caught —
Catch me who can, and make the catcher crowned —
Are taken by the forelock. Let it be.

But if you care indeed to listen, hear
 These measured words, my work of yestermorn.

“ We sleep and wake and sleep, but all things move
 The Sun flies forward to his brother Sun ;
 The dark Earth follows wheeled in her ellipse :
 And human things returning on themselves
 Move onward, leading up the golden year.

“ Ah, though the times when some new thought can bud
 Are but as poets' seasons when they flower,
 Yet seas that daily gain upon the shore
 Have ebb and flow conditioning their march,
 And slow and sure comes up the golden year.

“ When wealth no more shall rest in mounded heaps,
 But smit with freer light shall slowly melt
 In many streams to fatten lower lands,
 And light shall spread, and man be liker man
 Through all the season of the golden year.

“ Shall eagles not be eagles ? wrens be wrens ?
 If all the world were falcons, what of that ?
 The wonder of the eagle were the less,
 But he not less the eagle. Happy days
 Roll onward, leading up the golden year.

“ Fly, happy, happy sails, and bear the Press ;
 Fly happy with the mission of the Cross ;
 Knit land to land, and blowing havenward

With silks, and fruits, and spices, clear of toll,
 Enrich the markets of the golden year.

“ But we grow old. Ah ! when shall all men’s good
 Be each man’s rule, and universal Peace
 Lie like a shaft of light across the land,
 And like a lane of beams athwart the sea,
 Through all the circle of the golden year ? ”

Thus far he flowed, and ended ; whereupon
 “ Ah, folly ! ” in mimic cadence answered James —
 “ Ah, folly ! for it lies so far away,
 Not in our time, nor in our children’s time,
 ’T is like the second world to us that live,
 ’T were all as one to fix our hopes on Heaven
 As on this vision of the golden year.”

With that he struck his staff against the rocks
 And broke it, — James, — you know him, — old, but full
 Of force and choler, and firm upon his feet,
 And like an oaken stock in winter woods,
 O’erflourished with the hoary clematis :
 Then added, all in heat :

“ What stuff is this ?
 Old writers pushed the happy season back, —
 The more fools they, — we forward : dreamers both :
 You most, that in an age, when every hour
 Must sweat her sixty minutes to the death,
 Live on, God love us, as if the seedsman, rapt

Upon the teeming harvest, should not dip
His hand into the bag : but well I know
That unto him who works, and feels he works,
This same grand year is ever at the doors."

He spoke ; and, high above us, I heard them blast
The steep slate-quarry, and the great echo flap
And buffet round the hills from bluff to bluff.

ULYSSES.

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Matched with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me
I cannot rest from travel : I will drink
Life to the lees : all times I have enjoyed
Greatly, have suffered greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone ; on shore, and when
Through scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
Vext the dim sea : I am become a name ;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known ; cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honored of them all ;

And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.

I am a part of all that I have met ;

Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough
Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades
Forever and forever when I move.

How dull it is to pause, to make an end,

To rust unburnished, not to shine in use !

As though to breathe were life. Life piled on life

Were all too little, and of one to me

Little remains ! but every hour is saved

From that eternal silence, something more,

A bringer of new things ; and vile it were

For some three sums to store and hoard myself,

And this gray spirit yearning in desire

To follow knowledge, like a sinking star,

Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,

To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle —

Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil

This labor, by slow prudence to make mild

A rugged people, and through soft degrees

Subdue them to the useful and the good.

Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere

Of common duties, decent not to fail

In offices of tenderness, and pay
 Meet adoration to my household gods
 When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

There lies the port : the vessel puffs her sail :
 There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,
 Souls that have toiled, and wrought, and thought with
 me —

That eye with a frolic welcome took
 The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
 Free hearts, free foreheads — you and I are old ;
 Old age hath yet his honor and his toil ;
 Death closes all : but something ere the end,
 Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
 Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.

The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks :
 The long day wanes : the slow moon climbs : the deep
 Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
 'T is not too late to seek a newer world:
 Push off, and sitting well in order smite
 The sounding furrows ; for my purpose holds
 To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
 Of all the western stars, until I die.
 It may be that the gulfs will wash us down :
 It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
 And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
 Though much is taken, much abides ; and though

We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven ; that which we are, we are ;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

LOCKSLEY HALL.

COMRADES, leave me here a little, while as yet 't is
early morn :

Leave me here, and when you want me, sound upon
the bugle horn.

'T is the place, and all around it, as of old, the curlews
call

Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over Locksley
Hall ;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks the sandy
tracts,

And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cataracts.

Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere I went
to rest,

Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to the West.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising through the
mellow shade,

Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled in a silver braid.

Here about the beach I wandered, nourishing a youth
sublime

With the fairy tales of science, and the long result of
Time ;

When the centuries behind me like a fruitful land
reposed ;

When I clung to all the present for the promise that it
closed :

When I dipt into the future far as human eye could see ;
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that
would be. —

↙ In the Spring a fuller crimson comes upon the Robin's
breast ;

In the Spring the wanton lapwing gets himself another
crest ;

In the Spring a livelier iris changes on the burnished
dove ;

In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to
thoughts of love.

Then her cheek was pale and thinner than should be for
one so young,
And her eyes on all my motions with a mute observance
hung.

And I said, "My cousin Amy, speak, and speak the
truth to me,
Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being sets to
thee."

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a color and a
light,
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the northern
night.

And she turned — her bosom shaken with a sudden
storm of sighs —
All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of hazel eyes —
Saying, "I have hid my feelings, fearing they should do
me wrong ;"
Saying, "Dost thou love me, cousin ?" weeping, "I
have loved thee long."

Love took up the glass of Time, and turned it in his
glowing hands ;
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the
chords with might;
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, passed in music
out of sight.

Many a morning on the moorland did we hear the copses
ring,
And her whisper thronged my pulses with the fulness
of the Spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we watch the stately
ships,
And our spirits rushed together at the touching of the
lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted! O my Amy, mine no
more!
O the dreary, dreary moorland! O the barren, barren
shore!

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser than all songs
have sung,
Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a shrewish
tongue!

Is it well to wish thee happy? — having known me —
to decline
On a range of lower feelings and a narrower heart than
mine!

Yet it shall be: thou shalt lower to his level day by
day,

What is fine within thee growing coarse to^m sympathize
with clay.

As the husband is, the wife is; thou art mated with a
clown,

And the grossness of his nature will have weight to
drag thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion shall have spent its
novel force,

Something better than his dog, a little dearer than his
horse.

What is this? his eyes are heavy: think not they are
glazed with wine.

Go to him: it is thy duty: kiss him: take his hand in
thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his brain is over-
wrought:

Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch him with thy
lighter thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy things to under-
stand—

Better thou wert dead before me, though I slew thee
with my hand!

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from the heart's
disgrace,
Rolled in one another's arms, and silent in a last
embrace.

Cursed be the social wants that sin against the strength
of youth!

Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the living
truth!

Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest Nature's
rule!

Cursed be the gold that gilds the straitened forehead of
the fool!

Well,— 't is well that I should bluster! — Hadst thou
less unworthy proved —

Would to God — for I had loved thee more than ever
wife was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that which bears but
bitter fruit?

I will pluck it from my bosom, though my heart be at
the root.

Never, though my mortal summers to such length of
years should come

As the many-wintered crow that leads the clanging
rookery home.

Where is comfort? in division of the records of the
mind?

Can I part her from herself, and love her, as I knew her,
kind?

I remember one that perished: sweetly did she speak
and move:

Such a one do I remember, whom to look at was to
love.

Can I think of her as dead, and love her for the love
she bore?

✓ No—she never loved me truly: love is love forever-
more.

Comfort? comfort scorned of devils! this is truth the
poet sings,

That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier
things.

. Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it, lest thy heart be
put to proof,

In the dead, unhappy night, and when the rain is on the
roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and thou art staring at
the wall,

Where the dying night-lamp flickers, and the shadows
rise and fall.

Then a hand shall pass before thee, pointing to his
drunken sleep,

To thy widowed marriage-pillows, to the tears that thou
wilt weep.

Thou shalt hear the "Never, never," whispered by the
phantom years,

And a song from out the distance in the ringing of thine
ears ;

And an eye shall vex thee, looking ancient kindness on
thy pain.

Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow ; get thee to thy rest
again.

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace ; for a tender voice
will cry.

'T is a purer life than thine ; a lip to drain thy trouble
dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down : my latest rival brings
thee rest.

Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from the mother's
breast.

O, the child too clothes the father with a dearness not
his due.

Half is thine and half is his : it will be worthy of the
two.

O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy petty part,
With a little hoard of maxims preaching down a
daughter's heart.

“They were dangerous guides the feelings — she herself
was not exempt —
Truly, she herself had suffered” — Perish in thy self-
contempt!

Overlive it — lower yet — be happy! wherefore should I
care?

I myself must mix with action, lest I wither by despair.

What is that which I should turn to, lighting upon days
like these?

Every door is barred with gold, and opens but to golden
keys.

Every gate is thronged with suitors, all the markets
overflow.

I have but an angry fancy: what is that which I should
do?

I had been content to perish, falling on the foeman's
ground,

When the ranks are rolled in vapor, and the winds are
laid with sound.

But the jingling of the guinea helps the hurt that
Honor feels,
And the nations do but murmur, snarling at each
other's heels.

Can I but relive in sadness? I will turn that earlier
page.

Hide me from my deep emotion, oh thou wondrous
Mother-Age!

Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt before the
strife,

When I heard my days before me, and the tumult of my
life;

Yearning for the large excitement that the coming years
would yield,

Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves his father's
field,

And at night along the dusky highway near and nearer
drawn,

Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like a dreary
dawn;

And his spirit leaps within him to be gone before him
then,

Underneath the light he looks at, in among the throngs
of men;

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping something new :

That which they have done but earnest of the things that they shall do :

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,

Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be ;

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,

Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales ;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rained a ghastly dew

From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue ;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind rushing warm,

With the standards of the peoples plunging through the thunder-storm ;

Till the war-drum throbbed no longer, and the battle-flags were fur.ed

In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world

There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful
 realm in awe,
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal
 law.

So I triumphed, ere my passion sweeping through me
 left me dry,
Left me with the palsied heart, and left me with the
 jaundiced eye ;

Eye, to which all order festers, all things here are out
 of joint,
Science moves, but slowly, slowly, creeping on from
 point to point :

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion, creeping
 nigher,
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly-
 dying fire.

Yet I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose
 runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process
 of the suns.

What is that to him that reaps not harvest of his youth-
 ful joys,
Though the deep heart of existence beat forever like a
 boy's ?

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I linger on
the shore,
And the individual withers, and the world is more and
more.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and he bears a
laden breast,
Full of sad experience moving toward the stillness of his
rest.

Hark, my merry comrades call me, sounding on the
bugle-horn,
They to whom my foolish passion were a target for their
scorn :

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on such a mouldered
string ?

I am shamed through all my nature to have loved so
slight a thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weakness ! woman's pleas-
ure, woman's pain —

Nature made them blinder motions bounded in a shal-
lower brain :

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy passions, matched
with mine,

Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto
wine —

Here at least, where nature sickens, nothing. Ah, for
some retreat

Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my life began to
beat ;

Where in wild Mahratta-battle fell my father evil-
starred ;

I was left a trampled orphan, and a selfish uncle's
ward.

Or to burst all links of habit — there to wander far
away,

On from island unto island at the gateways of the
day.

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and happy
skies,

Breadths of tropic shade and palms in cluster, knots of
Paradise.

Never comes the trader, never floats an European flag,
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, droops the trailer
from the crag ;

Droops the heavy-blossomed bower, hangs the heavy-
fruited tree —

Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres of
sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment more than in this
march of mind,
In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts that
shake mankind.

There the passions, cramped no longer, shall have scope
and breathing-space ;
I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my dusky
race.

Iron-jointed, supple-sinewed, they shall dive, and they
shall run,
Catch the wild goat by the hair, and hurl their lances in
the sun ;

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap the rainbows of
the brooks,
Not with blinded eyesight poring over miserable books —
Fool, again the dream, the fancy ! but I *know* my words
are wild,
But I count the gray barbarian lower than the Christian
child.

I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of our glorious
gains,
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a beast with lower
pains !

Mated with a squalid savage — what to me were sun or
clime ?

I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of
time —

That rather held it better men should perish one by
one,

Than that earth should stand at gaze like Joshua's
moon in Ajalon !

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let
us range.

(Let the great world spin forever down the ringing
grooves of change.)

Through the shadow of the globe we sweep into the
younger day :

Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

Mother-age, (for mine I knew not,) help me as when life
began :

Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the lightnings,
weigh the Sun —

O, I see the crescent promise of my spirit hath not set.
Ancient founts of inspiration well through all my fancy
yet.

+

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell to Locksley
Hall !

Now for me the woods may wither, now for me the
roof-tree fall.

Comes a vapor from the margin, blackening over heath
and holt,

Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast a thunder-
bolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or hail, or fire or
snow ;

For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward, and I go.

GODIVA.

*I waited for the train at Coventry ;
I hung with grooms and porters on the bridge,
To watch the three tall spires ; and there I shaped
The city's ancient legend into this : —*

Not only we, the latest seed of Time,
New men, that in the flying of a wheel,
Cry down the past, not only we, that prate
Of rights and wrongs, have loved the people well,
And loathed to see them overtaxed ; but she
Did more, and underwent, and overcame,
The woman of a thousand summers back,
Godiva, wife to that grim Earl, who ruled
In Coventry : for when he laid a tax
Upon his town, and all the mothers brought
Their children, clamoring, " If we pay, we starve !"
She sought her lord, and found him, where he strode
About the hall, among his dogs, alone,

His beard a foot before him, and his hair
A yard behind. She told him of their tears,
And prayed him, "If they pay this tax, they starve."
Whereat he stared, replying half-amazed,
"You would not let your little finger ache
For such as *these*?" — "But I would die," said she.
He laughed, and swore by Peter and by Paul :
Then filliped at the diamond in her ear ;
"O ay, ay, ay, you talk!" — "Alas!" she said,
"But prove me what it is I would not do."
And from a heart as rough as Esau's hand,
He answered, "Ride you naked through the town,
And I repeal it;" and nodding, as in scorn,
He parted, with great strides among his dogs.

So left alone, the passions of her mind,
As winds from all the compass shift and blow,
Made war upon each other for an hour,
Till pity won. She sent a herald forth,
And bade him cry, with sound of trumpet, all
The hard condition ; but that she would loose
The people : therefore, as they loved her well,
From then till noon no foot should pace the street,
No eye look down, she passing ; but that all
Should keep within, door shut, and window barred.

Then fled she to her inmost bower, and there

Unclasped the wedded eagles of her belt,
The grim Earl's gift ; but ever at a breath
She lingered, looking like a summer moon
Half-dipt in cloud : anon she shook her head,
And showered the rippled ringlets to her knee ;
Unclad herself in haste ; adown the stair
Stole on ; and, like a creeping sunbeam, slid
From pillar unto pillar, until she reached
The gateway ; there she found her palfrey trapt
In purple blazoned with armorial gold.

Then she rode forth, clothed on with chastity :
The deep air listened round her as she rode,
And all the low wind hardly breathed for fear.
The little wide-mouthed heads upon the spout
Had cunning eyes to see : the barking cur
Made her cheek flame : her palfrey's footfall shot
Light horrors through her pulses : the blind walls
Were full of chinks and holes ; and overhead
Fantastic gables, crowding, stared : but she
Not less through all bore up, till, last, she saw
The white-flowered elder thicket from the field
Gleam through the Gothic archways in the wall.

Then she rode back, clothed on with chastity .
And one low churl, compact of thankless earth,
The fatal byword of all years to come,

Boring a little auger-hole in fear,
Peeped — but his eyes, before they had their will,
Were shrivelled into darkness in his head,
And dropt before him. So the Powers, who wait
On noble deeds, cancelled a sense misused ;
And she, that knew not, passed : and all at once,
With twelve great shocks of sound, the shameless noon
Was clashed and hammered from a hundred towers,
One after one : but even then she gained
Her bower ; whence reissuing, robed and crowned,
To meet her lord, she took the tax away,
And built herself an everlasting name.

THE TWO VOICES.

A STILL small voice spake unto me,
"Thou art so full of misery,
Were it not better not to be?"

Then to the still small voice I said
"Let me not cast in endless shade
What is so wonderfully made."

To which the voice did urge reply :
"To-day I saw the dragon-fly
Come from the wells where he did lie.

"An inner impulse rent the veil
Of his old husk : from head to tail
Came out clear plates of sapphire mail.

"He dried his wings : like gauze they grew ,
Through crofts and pastures wet with dew
A living flash of light he flew."

•

I said, "When first the world began,
Young Nature through five cycles ran,
And in the sixth she moulded man.

"She gave him mind, the lordliest
Proportion, and, above the rest,
Dominion in the head and breast."

Thereto the silent voice replied :
"Self-blinded are you by your pride :
Look up through night : the world is wide.

"This truth within thy mind rehearse
That in a boundless universe
Is boundless better, boundless worse.

"Think you this mould of hopes and fears
Could find no statelier than his peers
In yonder hundred million spheres ?"

It spake, moreover, in my mind :
"Though thou wert scattered to the wind,
Yet is there plenty of the kind."

Then did my response clearer fall :
"No compound of this earthly ball
Is like another, all in all."

To which he answered scoffingly :
" Good soul ! suppose I grant it thee,
Who 'll weep for thy deficiency ?

" Or will one beam be less intense,
When thy peculiar difference
Is cancelled in the world of sense ? "

I would have said, " Thou canst not know "
But my full heart, that worked below,
Rained through my sight its overflow.

Again the voice spake unto me :
" Thou art so steeped in misery,
Surely 't were better not to be.

" Thine anguish will not let thee sleep,
Nor any train of reason keep :
Thou canst not think, but thou wilt weep."

I said, " The years with change advance :
If I make dark my countenance,
I shut my life from happier chance.

" Some turn this sickness yet might take,
Even yet." But he : " What drug can make
A withered palsy cease to shake ? "

I wept, "Though I should die, I know
That all about the thorn will blow
In tufts of rosy-tinted snow ;

"And men, through novel spheres of thought
Still moving after truth long sought,
Will learn new things when I am not."

"Yet," said the secret voice, "some time,
Sooner or later, will gray prime
Make thy grass hoar with early rime.

"Not less swift souls that yearn for light,
Rapt after heaven's starry flight,
Would sweep the tracts of day and night.

"Not less the bee would range her cells,
The furzy prickle fire the dells,
The foxglove cluster dappled bells."

I said that "all the years invent ;
Each month is various to present
The world with some development.

"Were this not well, to bide mine hour,
Though watching from a ruined tower
How grows the day of human power ?"

"The highest-mounted mind," he said,
"Still sees the sacred morning spread
The silent summit overhead.

"Will thirty seasons render plain
Those lonely lights that still remain,
Just breaking over land and main ?

"Or make that morn, from his cold crown
And crystal silence creeping down,
Flood with full daylight glebe and town ?

"Forerun thy peers, thy time, and let
Thy feet, millenniums hence, be set
In midst of knowledge dreamed not yet.

"Thou hast not gained a real height,
Nor art thou nearer to the light,
Because the scale is infinite.

"'T were better not to breathe or speak,
Than cry for strength, remaining weak,
And seem to find, but still to seek.

"Moreover, but to seem to find
Asks what thou lackest, thought resigned,
A healthy frame, a quiet mind."

I said, "When I am gone away,
'He dared not tarry,' men will say,
Doing dishonor to my clay."

"This is more vile," he made reply,
"To breathe and loathe, to live and sigh,
Than once from dread of pain to die.

"Sick art thou — a divided will
Still heaping on the fear of ill
The fear of men, a coward still.

"Do men love thee? Art thou so bound
To men, that how thy name may sound
Will vex thee lying underground?

"The memory of the withered leaf
In endless time is scarce more brief
Than of the garnered Autumn-sheaf.

"Go, vexed Spirit, sleep in trust;
The right ear, that is filled with dust,
Hears little of the false or just."

"Hard task, to pluck resolve," I cried,
"From emptiness and the waste wide
Of that abyss, or scornful pride!

“Nay — rather yet that I could raise
One hope that warmed me in the days
While still I yearned for human praise.

“When, wide in soul and bold of tongue,
Among the tents I paused and sung,
The distant battle flashed and rung.

“I sung the joyful Pæan clear,
And, sitting, burnished without fear
The brand, the buckler, and the spear —

“Waiting to strive a happy strife,
To war with falsehood to the knife,
And not to lose the good of life —

“Some hidden principle to move,
To put together, part and prove,
And mete the bounds of hate and love —

“As far as might be, to carve out
Free space for every human doubt,
That the whole mind might orb about —

“To search through all I felt and saw,
The springs of life, the depths of awe,
And reach the law within the law .

"At least, not rotting like a weed,
But having sown some generous seed,
Fruitful of further thought and deed,

"To pass, when Life her light withdraws,
Not void of righteous self-applause,
Nor in a merely selfish cause —

"In some good cause, not in mine own,
To perish, wept for, honored, known,
And like a warrior overthrown ;

"Whose eyes are dim with glorious tears,
When, soiled with noble dust, he hears
His country's war-song thrill his ears :

"Then dying of a mortal stroke,
What time the foeman's line is broke,
And all the war is rolled in smoke."

"Yea!" said the voice, "thy dream was good,
While thou abodest in the bud.
It was the stirring of the blood.

"If Nature put not forth her power
About the opening of the flower,
Who is it that could live an hour ?

“Then comes the check, the change, the fall.
Pain rises up, old pleasures pall.
There is one remedy for all.

“Yet hadst thou, through enduring pain,
Linked month to month with such a chain
Of knitted purport, all were vain.

“Thou hadst not between death and birth
Dissolved the riddle of the earth.
So were thy labor little-worth.

“That men with knowledge merely played,
I told thee — hardly nigher made,
Though scaling slow from grade to grade ;

“Much less this dreamer, deaf and blind,
Named man, may hope some truth to find,
That bears relation to the mind.

“For every worm beneath the moon
Draws different threads, and late and soon
Spins, toiling out his own cocoon.

“Cry, faint not : either Truth is born
Beyond the polar gleam forlorn,
Or in the gateways of the morn.

“Cry, faint not, climb : the summits slope
Beyond the furthest flights of hope,
Wrapt in dense cloud from base to cope,

“Sometimes a little corner shines,
As over rainy mist inclines
A gleaming crag with belts of pines.

“I will go forward, sayest thou,
I shall not fail to find her now.
Look up, the fold is on her brow.

“If straight thy track, or if oblique,
Thou know 'st not. Shadows thou dost strike,
Embracing cloud, Ixion-like ;

“And owning but a little more
Than beasts, abidest lame and poor,
Calling thyself a little lower

“Than angels. Cease to wail and brawl!
Why inch by inch to darkness crawl?
There is one remedy for all.”

“O dull, one-sided voice,” said I,
“Wilt thou make everything a lie,
To flatter me that I may die ?

"I know that age to age succeeds,
Blowing a noise of tongues and deeds,
A dust of systems and of creeds.

"I cannot hide that some have striven,
Achieving calm, to whom was given
The joy that mixes man with Heaven :

"Who, rowing hard against the stream
Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,
And did not dream it was a dream ;

"But heard, by secret transport led,
Even in the charnels of the dead,
The murmur of the fountain-head —

"Which did accomplish their desire,
Bore and forbore, and did not tire,
Like Stephen, an unquenched fire.

"He heeded not reviling tones,
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,
Though cursed and scorned, and bruised with stones :

"But looking upward, full of grace,
He prayed, and from a happy place
God's glory smote him on the face."

The sullen answer slid betwixt :
" Not that the grounds of hope were fixed,
The elements were kindlier mixed."

I said, " I toil beneath the curse,
But, knowing not the universe,
I fear to slide from bad to worse.

" And that, in seeking to undo
One riddle, and to find the true,
I knit a hundred others new :

" Or that this anguish fleeting hence,
Unmanacled from bonds of sense,
Be fixed and frozen to permanence :

" For I go, weak from suffering here ;
Naked I go, and void of cheer :
What is it that I may not fear ?"

" Consider well," the voice replied,
" His face, that two hours since hath died ;
Wilt thou find passion, pain or pride ?

" Will he obey when one commands ?
Or answer should one press his hands ?
He answers not, nor understands.

"His palms are folded on his breast:
There is no other thing expressed
But long disquiet merged in rest.

"His lips are very mild and meek:
Though one should smite him on the cheek,
And on the mouth, he will not speak.

"His little daughter, whose sweet face
He kissed, taking his last embrace,
Becomes dishonor to her race—

"His sons grow up that bear his name,
Some grow to honor, some to shame,—
But he is chill to praise or blame.

"He will not hear the north-wind rave,
Nor, moaning, household shelter crave
From winter rains that beat his grave.

"High up the vapors fold and swim:
About him broods the twilight dim:
The place he knew forgetteth him."

"If all be dark, vague voice," I said,
"These things are wrapped in doubt and dread,
Nor canst thou show the dead are dead.

“The sap dries up: the plant declines.
A deeper tale my heart divines.
Know I not Death? the outward signs?”

“I found him when my years were few;
A shadow on the graves I knew,
And darkness in the village yew.

“From grave to grave the shadow crept.
In her still place the morning wept:
Touched by his feet the daisy slept.

“The simple senses crowned his head:
‘Omega! thou art Lord,’ they said,
‘We find no motion in the dead.’”

“Why, if man rot in dreamless ease,
Should that plain fact, as taught by these,
Not make him sure that he shall cease?”

“Who forged that other influence,
That heat of inward evidence,
By which he doubts against the sense?”

“He owns the fatal gift of eyes,
That read his spirit blindly wise,
Not simple as a thing that dies.

“ Here sits he shaping wings to fly ;
His heart forebodes a mystery :
He names the name Eternity.

“ That type of Perfect in his mind
In Nature can he nowhere find,
He sows himself on every wind.

“ He seems to hear a Heavenly Friend,
And through thick veils to apprehend
A labor working to an end.

“ The end and the beginning vex
His reason : many things perplex,
With motions, checks, and counter-checks.

“ He knows a baseness in his blood
At such strange war with something good,
He may not do the thing he would.

“ Heaven opens inward, chasms yawn.
Vast images in glimmering dawn,
Half shown, are broken and withdrawn.

“ Ah ! sure within him and without,
Could his dark wisdom find it out,
There must be answer to his doubt.

“ But thou canst answer not again.
With thine own weapon art thou slain,
Or thou wilt answer but in vain.

“ The doubt would rest, I dare not solve.
In the same circle we revolve.
Assurance only breeds resolve.”

As when a billow, blown against,
Falls back, the voice with which I fenced
A little ceased, but recommenced.

“ Where wert thou when thy father played
In his free field, and pastime made,
A merry boy in sun and shade ?

“ A merry boy they called him then.
He sat upon the knees of men
In days that never come again.

“ Before the little ducts began
To feed thy bones with lime, and ran
Their course, till thou wert also man :

“ Who took a wife, who reared his race,
Whose wrinkles gathered on his face,
Whose troubles number with his days :

"A life of nothings, nothing-worth,
From that first nothing ere his birth
To that last nothing under earth!"

"These words," I said, "are like the rest,
No certain clearness, but at best
A vague suspicion of the breast:

"But if I grant, thou might'st defend
The thesis which thy words intend—
That to begin implies to end;

"Yet how should I for certain hold,
Because my memory is so cold,
That I first was in human mould?

"I cannot make this matter plain,
But I would shoot, howe'er in vain,
A random arrow from the brain.

"It may be that no life is found,
Which only to one engine bound
Falls off, but cycles always round.

"As old mythologies relate,
Some draught of Lethe might await
The slipping through from state to state.

“ As here we find in trances, men
Forget the dream that happens then,
Until they fall in trance again.

“ So might we, if our state were such
As one before, remember much,
For those two likes might meet and touch.

“ But, if I lapsed from nobler place,
Some legend of a fallen race
Alone might hint of my disgrace ;

“ Some vague emotion of delight
In gazing up an Alpine height,
Some yearning toward the lamps of night.

“ Or if through lower lives I came —
Though all experience past became
Consolidate in mind and frame —

“ I might forget my weaker lot ;
For is not our first year forgot ?
The haunts of memory echo not.

“ And men, whose reason long was blind,
From cells of madness unconfined,
Oft lose whole years of darker mind.

"Much more, if first I floated free,
As naked essence, must I be
Incompetent of memory :

"For memory dealing but with time,
And he with matter, could she climb
Beyond her own material prime ?

"Moreover, something is or seems,
That touches me with mystic gleams,
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams —

"Of something felt, like something here ;
Of something done, I know not where ;
Such as no language may declare."

The still voice laughed. "I talk," said he,
"Not with thy dreams. Suffice it thee
Thy pain is a reality."

"But thou," said I, "hast missed thy mark.
Who sought'st to wreck my mortal ark,
By making all the horizon dark.

"Why not set forth, if I should do
This rashness, that which might ensue
With this old soul in organs new ?

“Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
No life that breathes with human breath
Has ever truly longed for death.

“’T is life, whereof our nerves are scant,
O life, not death, for which we pant ;
More life, and fuller, that I want.”

I ceased, and sat as one forlorn.
Then said the voice, in quiet scorn,
“Behold, it is the Sabbath morn.”

And I arose, and I released
The casement, and the light increased
With freshness in the dawning east.

Like softened airs that blowing steal,
When meres begin to uncongéal,
The sweet church bells began to peal.

On to God’s house the people prest :
Passing the place where each must rest,
Each entered like a welcome guest.

One walked between his wife and child,
With measured footfall firm and mild,
And now and then he gravely smiled.

The prudent partner of his blood
Leaned on him, faithful, gentle, good,
Wearing the rose of womanhood.

And in their double love secure,
The little maiden walked demure,
Pacing with downward eyelids pure.

These three made unity so sweet,
My frozen heart began to beat,
Remembering its ancient heat.

I blest them, and they wandered on :
I spoke, but answer came there none :
The dull and bitter voice was gone.

A second voice was at mine ear,
A little whisper silver-clear,
A murmur, " Be of better cheer."

As from some blissful neighborhood,
A notice faintly understood,
" I see the end, and know the good."

A little hint to solace woe,
A hint, a whisper breathing low,
" I may not speak of what I know."

Like an Æolian harp that wakes
No certain air, but overtakes
Far thought with music that it makes :

Such seemed the whisper at my side :
" What is it thou knowest, sweet voice ? " I cried.
" A hidden hope," the voice replied :

So heavenly-toned, that in that hour
From out my sullen heart a power
Broke, like the rainbow from the shower,

To feel, although no tongue can prove,
That every cloud, that spreads above
And veileth love, itself is love.

And forth into the fields I went,
And Nature's living motion lent
The pulse of hope to discontent.

I wondered at the bounteous hours,
The slow result of winter showers :
You scarce could see the grass for flowers.

I wondered, while I paced along :
The woods were filled so full with song,
There seemed no room for sense of wrong.

So variously seemed all things wrought,
I marvelled how the mind was brought
To anchor by one gloomy thought;

And wherefore rather I made choice
To commune with that barren voice,
Than him that said, "Rejoice! rejoice!"

THE DAY-DREAM.



PROLOGUE.

O, LADY FLORA, let me speak :
A pleasant hour has past away
While, dreaming on your damask cheek,
The dewy sister-eyelids lay.
As by the lattice you reclined,
I went through many wayward moods
To see you dreaming — and, behind,
A summer crisp with shining woods.
And I too dreamed, until at last
Across my fancy, brooding warm,
The reflex of a legend past,
And loosely settled into form.
And would you have the thought I had,
And see the vision that I saw,
So take the broidery-frame, and add
A crimson to the quaint Macaw,

And I will tell it. Turn your face,
Nor look with that too-earnest eye —
The rhymes are dazzled from their place,
And ordered words asunder fly.

THE SLEEPING PALACE.

The varying year with blade and sheaf
Clothes and reclothes the happy plains;
Here rests the sap within the leaf,
Here stays the blood along the veins.
Faint shadows, vapors lightly curled,
Faint murmurs from the meadows come,
Like hints and echoes of the world
To spirits folded in the womb.

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns
On every slanting terrace-lawn.
The fountain to his place returns
Deep in the garden lake withdrawn.
Here droops the banner on the tower,
On the hall-hearths the festal fires,
The peacock in his laurel bower,
The parrot in his gilded wires.

Roof-haunting martins warm their eggs :
In these, in those the life is stayed.
The mantles from the golden pegs
Droop sleepily : no sound is made,
Not even of a gnat that sings.
More like a picture seemeth all
Than those old portraits of old kings,
That watch the sleepers from the wall.

Here sits the Butler with a flask
Between his knees, half-drained ; and there
The wrinkled steward at his task,
The maid-of-honor blooming fair :
The page has caught her hand in his :
Her lips are severed as to speak :
His own are pouted to a kiss :
The blush is fixed upon her cheek.

Till all the hundred summers pass,
The beams, that through the Oriel shine,
Make prisms in every carven glass,
And beaker brimmed with noble wine.
Each baron at the banquet sleeps,
Grave faces gathered in a ring.
His state the king reposing keeps.
He must have been a jolly king.

All round a hedge upshoots, and shows
At distance like a little wood ;
Thorns, ivies, woodbine, mistletoes,
And grapes with bunches red as blood ;
All creeping plants, a wall of green
Close-matted, bur and brake and briar,
And glimpsing over these, just seen,
High up, the topmost palace-spire.

When will the hundred summers die,
And thought and time be born again,
And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,
Bring truth that sways the soul of men ?
Here all things in their place remain,
As all were ordered, ages since.
Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and Pain,
And bring the fated fairy Prince.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY.

Year after year unto her feet,
She lying on her couch alone,
Across the purple coverlet,
The maiden's jet-black hair has grown,

On either side her tranced form
Forth streaming from a braid of pearl :
The slumbrous light is rich and warm,
And moves not on the rounded curl.

The silk star-broidered coverlid
Unto her limbs itself doth mould
Languidly ever ; and, amid
Her full black ringlets downward rolled,
Gloweth forth each softly-shadowed arm
With bracelets of the diamond bright :
Her constant beauty doth inform
Stillness with love, and day with light.

She sleeps : her breathings are not heard
In palace chambers far apart.
The fragrant tresses are not stirred
That lie upon her charmed heart.
She sleeps : on either hand upswells
The gold-fringed pillow lightly prest :
She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever dwells
A perfect form in perfect rest.

THE ARRIVAL.

All precious things, discovered late,
To those that seek them issue forth ;
For love in sequel works with fate,
And draws the veil from hidden worth.
He travels far from other skies —
His mantle glitters on the rocks —
A fairy Prince, with joyful eyes,
And lighter-footed than the fox.

The bodies and the bones of those
That strove in other days to pass,
Are withered in the thorny close,
Or scattered blanching in the grass.
He gazes on the silent dead :
“They perished in their daring deeds.”
This proverb flashes through his head,
“The many fail : the one succeeds.”

He comes, scarce knowing what he seeks :
He breaks the hedge : he enters there :
The color flies into his cheeks :
He trusts to light on something fair

For all his life the charm did talk
About his path, and hover near
With words of promise in his walk,
And whispered voices in his ear.

More close and close his footsteps wind ;
The magic music in his heart
Beats quick and quicker, till he find
The quiet chamber far apart.
His spirit flutters like a lark,
He stoops — to kiss her — on his knee.
“ Love, if thy tresses be so dark,
How dark those hidden eyes must be ! ”

THE REVIVAL.

A touch, a kiss ! the charm was snapt.
There rose a noise of striking clocks,
And feet that ran, and doors that clapt,
And barking dogs, and crowing cocks ;
A fuller light illumined all,
A breeze through all the garden swept,
A sudden hubbub shook the hall,
And sixty feet the fountain leapt.

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,
The butler drank, the steward scrawled,
The fire shot up, the martin flew,
The parrot screamed, the peacock squalled,
The maid and page renewed their strife,
The palace banged, and buzzed and clackt,
And all the long-pent stream of life
Dashed downward in a cataract.

And last of all the king awoke,
And in his chair himself upreared,
And yawned, and rubbed his face, and spoke,
"By holy rood, a royal beard!
How say you? we have slept, my lords.
My beard has grown into my lap."
The barons swore, with many words,
'T was but an after-dinner's nap.

"Pardy," returned the king, "but still
My joints are something stiff or so.
My lord, and shall we pass the bill
I mentioned half an hour ago?"
The chancellor, sedate and vain,
In courteous words returned reply:
But dallied with his golden chain,
And, smiling, put the question by.

THE DEPARTURE.

And on her lover's arm she leant,
And round her waist she felt it fold,
And far across the hills they went
In that new world which is the old :
Across the hills, and far away
Beyond their utmost purple rim,
And deep into the dying day
The happy princess followed him.

"I'd sleep another hundred years,
O love, for such another kiss ;"
"O wake forever, love," she hears,
"O love, 't was such as this and this."
And o'er them many a sliding star,
And many a merry wind was borne,
And, streamed through many a golden bar,
The twilight melted into morn.

"O eyes long laid in happy sleep !"
"O happy sleep, that lightly fled !"
"O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep !"
"O love, thy kiss would wake the dead !"

And o'er them many a flowing range
Of vapor buoyed the crescent-bark,
And, rapt through many a rosy change,
The twilight died into the dark.

“ A hundred summers ! can it be ?
And whither goest thou, tell me where ! ”
“ O seek my father's court with me,
For there are greater wonders there.”
And o'er the hills, and far away
Beyond their utmost purple rim,
Beyond the night, across the day,
Through all the world she followed him.

MORAL.

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,
And if you find no moral there,
Go look in any glass and say,
What moral is in being fair.
O, to what uses shall we put
The wildweed-flower that simply blows ?
And is there any moral shut
Within the bosom of the rose ?

But any man that walks the mead,
In bud or blade, or bloom, may find,
According as his humors lead,
A meaning suited to his mind.
And liberal applications lie
In Art like Nature, dearest friend ;
So 't were to cramp its use, if I
Should hook it to some useful end.

L'ENVOI.

You shake your head. A random string
Your finer female sense offends.
Well — were it not a pleasant thing
To fall asleep with all one's friends ;
To pass with all our social ties
To silence from the paths of men ;
And every hundred years to rise
And learn the world, and sleep again ;
To sleep through terms of mighty wars,
And wake on science grown to more,
On secrets of the brain, the stars,
As wild as aught of fairy lore ;

And all that else the years will show,
 The Poet-forms of stronger hours,
 The vast Republics that may grow,
 The Federations and the Powers ;
 Titanic forces taking birth
 In divers seasons, divers climes ;
 For we are Ancients of the earth,
 And in the morning of the times.

So sleeping, so aroused from sleep
 Through sunny decades new and strange,
 Or gay quinqueniads, would we reap
 The flower and quintessence of change.

Ah, yet would I — and would I might !
 So much your eyes my fancy take —
 Be still the first to leap to light,
 That I might kiss those eyes awake !
 For, am I right or am I wrong,
 To choose your own you did not care ;
 You'd have *my* moral from the song,
 And I will take my pleasure there :
 And, am I right or am I wrong,
 My fancy, ranging through and through,
 To search a meaning for the song,
 Perforce will still revert to you ;

Nor finds a closer truth than this
All-graceful head, so richly curled,
And evermore a costly kiss,
The prelude to some brighter world.

For since the time when Adam first
Embraced his Eve in happy hour,
And every bird of Eden burst
In carol, every bud to flower,
What eyes, like thine, have wakened hopes ?
What lips, like thine, so sweetly joined ?
Where on the double rosebud droops
The fulness of the pensive mind ;
Which all too dearly self-involved,
Yet sleeps a dreamless sleep to me ;
A sleep by kisses undissolved,
That lets thee neither hear nor see :
But break it. In the name of wife,
And in the rights that name may give,
Are clasped the moral of thy life,
And that for which I care to live.

EPILOGUE.

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,
And, if you find a meaning there,
O whisper to your glass, and say,
“What wonder, if he thinks me fair?”
What wonder I was all unwise,
To shape the song for your delight,
Like long-tailed birds of Paradise,
That float through Heaven, and cannot light?
Or old-world trains, upheld at court
By Cupid-boys of blooming hue —
But take it — earnest wed with sport,
And either sacred unto you.

AMPHION.

My father left a park to me,
But it is wild and barren,
A garden too with scarce a tree,
And waster than a warren :
Yet say the neighbors when they call,
It is not bad but good land,
And in it is the germ of all
That grows within the woodland.

O had I lived when song was great
In days of old Amphion,
And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,
Nor cared for seed or scion !
And had I lived when song was great,
And legs of trees were limber,
And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,
And fiddled in the timber !

'T is said he had a tuneful tongue,
Such happy intonation,
Wherever he sat down and sung
He left a small plantation ;
Wherever in a lonely grove
He set up his forlorn pipes,
The gouty oak began to move,
And flounder into hornpipes.

The mountain stirred its busy crown,
And, as tradition teaches,
Young ashes pirouetted down,
Coquetting with young beeches ;
And briony-vine and ivy-wreath
Ran forward to his rhyming,
And from the valleys underneath
Came little copses climbing.

The birch-tree swang her fragrant hair,
The bramble cast her berry,
The gin within the juniper
Began to make him merry,
The poplars, in long order due,
With cypress promenaded,
The shock-head willows two and two
By rivers galloped.

Came wet-shod alder from the wave,
 Came yews, a dismal coterie ;
 Each plucked his one foot from the grave,
 Poussetting with a sloe-tree :
 Old elms came breaking from the vine,
 The vine streamed out to follow,
 And, sweating rosin, plumped the pine
 From many a cloudy hollow.

And was n't it a sight to see,
 When, ere his song was ended,
 Like some great landslip, tree by tree,
 The country-side descended ;
 And shepherds from the mountain-eaves
 Looked down, half-pleased, half-frightened,
 As dashed about the drunken leaves
 The random sunshine lightened !

O, nature first was fresh to men,
 And wanton without measure ;
 So youthful and so flexile then,
 You moved her at your pleasure.
 Twang out, my fiddle ! shake the twigs !
 And make her dance attendance :
 Blow, flute, and stir the stiff-set sprigs,
 And scirrhous roots and tendons.

'T is vain ! in such a brassy age
I could not move a thistle ;
The very sparrows in the hedge
Scarce answer to my whistle ;
Or at the most, when three-parts-sick
With strumming and with scraping,
A jackass heehaws from the rick,
The passive oxen gaping.

But what is that I hear ? a sound
Like sleepy counsel pleading :
O Lord ! — 't is in my neighbor's ground,
The modern Muses reading.
They read Botanic Treatises,
And Works on Gardening through there,
And Methods of transplanting trees,
To look as if they grew there.

The withered Misses ! how they prose
O'er books of travelled seamen,
And show you slips of all that grows
From England to Van Diemen.
They read in arbors clipt and cut,
And alleys, faded places,
By squares of tropic summer shut,
And warmed in crystal cases.

But these, though fed with careful dirt,
Are neither green nor sappy ;
Half-conscious of the garden-squirt,
The poor things look unhappy.
Better to me the meanest weed
That blows upon its mountain,
The vilest herb that runs to seed
Beside its native fountain.

And I must work through months of toil,
And years of cultivation,
Upon my proper patch of soil,
To grow my own plantation.
I'll take the showers as they fall,
I will not vex my bosom :
Enough, if at the end of all
A little garden blossom.

ST. AGNES.



I.

DEEP on the convent-roof the snOWS
Are sparkling to the moon :
My breath to heaven like vapor goes :
May my soul follow soon !
The shadows of the convent-towers
Slant down the snowy swIRL,
Still creeping with the creePIng hours
That lead me to my Lord :
Make Thou my spirit pure and clear
As are the frosty skies,
Or this first snowdrop of the year
That in my bosom lies.

II.

As these white robes are soiled and dark,
To yonder shining ground ;
As this pale taper's earthly spark,
To yonder argent round ;

So shows my soul before the Lamb,
My spirit before Thee ;
So in mine earthly house I am,
To that I hope to be.
Break up the heavens, oh Lord ! and far,
Through all yon starlight keen,
Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,
In raiment white and clean.

III.

He lifts me to the golden doors ;
The flashes come and go ;
All heaven bursts her starry floors,
And strews her lights below,
And deepens on and up ! the gates
Roll back, and far within
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,
To make me pure of sin.
The sabbaths of Eternity,
One sabbath deep and wide —
A light upon the shining sea —
The Bridegroom with his bride !

SIR GALAHAD.



I.

My good blade carves the casques of men,
My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure.
The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,
The hard brands shiver on the steel,
The splintered spear-shafts crack and fly,
The horse and rider reel :
They reel, they roll in clanging lists,
And when the tide of combat stands,
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
That lightly rain from ladies' hands

II.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend
 On whom their favors fall !
 For them I battle till the end,
 To save from shame and thrall :
 But all my heart is drawn above,
 My knees are bowed in crypt and shrine
 I never felt the kiss of love,
 Nor maiden's hand in mine.
 More bounteous aspects on me beam,
 Me mightier transports move and thrill ;
 So keep I fair through faith and prayer
 A virgin heart in work and will.

III.

When down the stormy crescent goes,
 A light before me swims,
 Between dark stems the forest glows,
 I hear a noise of hymns :
 Then by some secret shrine I ride ;
 I hear a voice, but none are there ;
 The stalls are void, the doors are wide,
 The tapers burning fair.
 Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,
 The silver vessels sparkle clean,
 The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,
 And solemn chaunts resound between.

IV.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres
I find a magic bark ;
I leap on board : no helmsman steers
I float till all is dark.
A gentle sound, an awful light !
Three angels bear the holy Grail :
With folded feet, in stoles of white,
On sleeping wings they sail.
Ah, blessed vision ! blood of God !
My spirit beats her mortal bars,
As down dark tides the glory slides,
And star-light mingles with the stars.

V.

When on my goodly charger borne
Through dreaming towns I go,
The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,
The streets are dumb with snow.
The tempest crackles on the leads,
And, ringing, spins from brand and mail
But o'er the dark a glory spreads,
And gilds the driving hail.
I leave the plain, I climb the height ;
No branchy thicket shelter yields ;
But blessed forms in whistling storms
Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

VI.

A maiden knight — to me is given
 Such hope, I know not fear ;
 I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
 That often meet me here.
 I muse on joy that will not cease,
 Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
 Pure lilies of eternal peace,
 Whose odors haunt my dreams ;
 And, stricken by an angel's hand,
 This mortal armor that I wear,
 This weight and size, this heart and eyes,
 Are touched, are turned to finest air.

VII.

The clouds are broken in the sky,
 And through the mountain-walls
 A rolling organ-harmony
 Swells up, and shakes and falls.
 Then move the trees, the copses nod,
 Wings flutter, voices hover clear :
 "O just and faithful knight of God !
 Ride on ! the prize is near."
 So pass I hostel, hall, and grange ;
 By bridge and ford, by park and pale,
 All-armed I ride, whate'er betide,
 Until I find the holy Grail.

EDWARD GRAY.

SWEET Emma Moreland of yonder town
Met me walking on yonder way,
“And have you lost your heart?” she said;
“And are you married yet, Edward Gray?”

Sweet Emma Moreland spoke to me :
Bitterly weeping I turned away :
“Sweet Emma Moreland, love no more
Can touch the heart of Edward Gray.

“Ellen Adair she loved me well,
Against her father's and mother's will :
To-day I sat for an hour and wept,
By Ellen's grave, on the windy hill.

“Shy she was, and I thought her cold ;
Thought her proud, and fled over the sea ;
Filled I was with folly and spite,
When Ellen Adair was dying for me.

“Cruel. cruel were the words I said !
Cruelly came they back to-day :
‘You ’re too slight and fickle,’ I said,
‘To trouble the heart of Edward Gray.’

“There I put my face in the grass —
Whispered, ‘Listen to my despair :
I repent me of all I did :
Speak a little, Ellen Adair !’

“Then I took a pencil, and wrote
On a mossy stone, as I lay,
‘Here lies the body of Ellen Adair ;
And here the heart of Edward Gray !

“Love may come, and love may go.
And fly, like a bird, from tree to tree :
But I will love no more, no more,
Till Ellen Adair come back to me.

“Bitterly wept I over the stone :
Bitterly weeping I turned away :
There lies the body of Ellen Adair !
And there the heart of Edward Gray !”

WILL WATERPROOF'S LYRICAL MONOLOGUE.

MADE AT THE COCK.



O PLUMP head-waiter at The Cock,
To which I most resort,
How goes the time? 'T is five o'clock.
Go fetch a pint of port :
But let it not be such as that
You set before chance-comers,
But such whose father-grape grew fat
On Lusitanian summers.

No vain libation to the Muse,
But may she still be kind,
And whisper lovely words, and use
Her influence on the mind.
To make me write my random rhymes,
Ere they be half-forgotten ;
Nor add and alter, many times,
Till all be ripe and rotten.

I pledge her, and she comes and dips
Her laurel in the wine,
And lays it thrice upon my lips,
These favored lips of mine ;
Until the charm have power to make
New life-blood warm the bosom,
And barren commonplaces break
To full and kindly blossom.

I pledge her silent at the board ;
Her gradual fingers steal
And touch upon the master-chord
Of all I felt and feel.
Old wishes, ghosts of broken plans,
And phantom hopes assemble ;
And that child's heart within the man's
Begins to move and tremble.

Through many an hour of summer suns,
By many pleasant ways,
Like Hezekiah's, backward runs
The shadow of my days :
I kiss the lips I once have kissed ;
The gas-light wavers dimmer ;
And softly, through a vinous mist,
My college friendships glimmer.

I grow in worth, and wit, and sense,
Unboding critic-pen,
Or that eternal want of pence,
Which vexes public men,
Who hold their hands to all, and cry
For that which all deny them —
Who sweep the crossings, wet or dry,
And all the world go by them.

Ah yet, though all the world forsake,
Though fortune clip my wings,
I will not cramp my heart, nor take
Half-views of men and things.
Let Whig and Tory stir their blood ;
There must be stormy weather ;
But for some true result of good
All parties work together.

Let there be thistles, there are grapes ;
If old things, there are new ;
Ten thousand broken lights and shapes,
Yet glimpses of the true.
Let raffs be rife in prose and rhyme,
We lack not rhymes and reasons,
As on this whirligig of Time
We circle with the seasons.

This earth is rich in man and maid ;
 With fair horizons bound :
 This whole wide earth of light and shade
 Comes out, a perfect round.
 High over roaring Temple-bar,
 And, set in Heaven's third story,
 I look at all things as they are,
 But through a kind of glory.

* * * *

Head-waiter, honored by the guest
 Half-mused, or reeling-ripe,
 The pint, you brought me, was the best
 That ever came from pipe.
 But though the port surpasses praise,
 My nerves have dealt with stiffer.
 Is there some magic in the place ?
 Or do my peptics differ ?

For since I came to live and learn,
 No pint of white or red
 Had ever half the power to turn
 This wheel within my head,
 Which bears a seasoned brain about,
 Unsubject to confusion,
 Though soaked and saturate, out and out,
 Through every convolution.

For I am of a numerous house,
With many kinsmen gay,
Where long and largely we carouse,
As who shall say me nay :
Each month, a birth-day coming on,
We drink, defying trouble,
Or, sometimes two would meet in one,
And then we drank it double ,

Whether the vintage, yet unkept,
Had relish fiery-new,
Or, elbow-deep in sawdust, slept,
As old as Waterloo ;
Or stowed (when classic Canning died)
In musty bins and chambers,
Had cast upon its crusty side
The gloom of ten Decembers.

The Muse, the jolly Muse, it is !
She answered to my call,
She changes with that mood or this,
Is all-in-all to all :
She lit the spark within my throat,
To make my blood run quicker,
Used all her fiery will, and smote
Her life into the liquor.

And hence this halo lives about
The waiter's hands, that reach
To each his perfect pint of stout,
His proper chop to each.
He looks not like the common breed
That with the napkin dally ;
I think he came, like Ganymede,
From some delightful valley.

The Cock was of a larger egg
Than modern poultry drop,
Stept forward on a firmer leg,
And crammed a plumper crop ;
Upon an ampler dunghill trod,
Crowed lustier, late and early,
Sipt wine from silver, praising God,
And raked in golden barley.

A private life was all his joy,
Till in a court he saw
A something-pottle-bodied boy,
That knuckled at the taw :
He stooped and clutched him, fair and good,
Flew over roof and casement :
His brothers of the weather stood
Stock-still for sheer amazement.

But he, by farmstead, thorp and spire,
 And followed with acclaims,
 A sign to many a staring shire,
 Came crowing over Thames.
 Right down by smoky Paul's they bore,
 Till, where the street grows straiter,
 One fixed forever at the door,
 And one became head-waiter.

* * * *

But whither would my fancy go?
 How out of place she makes
 The violet of a legend blow
 Among the chops and steaks!
 'T is but a steward of the can,
 One shade more plump than common;
 As just and mere a serving-man
 As any, born of woman.

I ranged too high : what draws me down
 Into the common day?
 Is it the weight of that half-crown,
 Which I shall have to pay?
 For, something duller than at first,
 Nor wholly comfortable,
 I sit, (my empty glass reversed,)
 And thrumming on the table :

Half fearful that, with self at strife,
I take myself to task :
Lest of the fulness of my life
I leave an empty flask :
For I had hope, by something rare,
To prove myself a poet ;
But, while I plan and plan, my hair
Is gray before I know it.

So fares it since the years began,
Till they be gathered up ;
The truth that flies the flowing can,
Will haunt the vacant cup :
And others' follies teach us not,
Nor much their wisdom teaches ;
And most, of sterling worth, is what
Our own experience preaches.

Ah ! let the rusty theme alone !
We know not what we know.
But for my pleasant hour, 't is gone,
'T is gone, and let it go.
'T is gone : a thousand such have slept
Away from my embraces,
And fallen into the dusty crypt
Of darkened forms and faces.

Go, therefore, thou ! thy betters went
 Long since, and came no more :
With peals of genial clamor sent
 From many a tavern-door,
With twisted quirks and happy hits,
 From misty men of letters ;
The tavern-hours of mighty wits —
 Thine elders and thy betters.

Hours, when the Poet's words and looks
 Had yet their native glow :
Not yet the fear of little books
 Had made him talk for show ;
But, all his vast heart sherris-warmed,
 He flashed his random speeches ;
Ere days, that deal in ana, swarmed
 His literary leeches.

So mix forever with the past,
 Like all good things on earth !
For should I prize thee, couldst thou last,
 At half thy real worth ?
I hold it good, good things should pass :
 With time I will not quarrel :
It is but yonder empty glass
 That makes me maudlin-moral.

* * * *

Head-waiter of the chop-house here,
To which I most resort,
I too must part: I hold thee dear
For this good pint of port.
For this, thou shalt from all things suck
Marrow of mirth and laughter;
And, wheresoe'er thou move, good luck
Shall fling her old shoe after.

But thou wilt never move from hence,
The sphere thy fate allots:
Thy latter days increased with pence
Go down among the pots:
Thou battenest by the greasy gleam
In haunts of hungry sinners,
Old boxes, larded with the steam
Of thirty thousand dinners.

We fret, *we* fume, would shift our skins,
Would quarrel with our lot;
Thy care is, under polished tins,
To serve the hot-and-hot;
To come and go, and come again,
Returning like the pewit,
And watched by silent gentlemen,
That trifle with the cruet.

Live long, ere from thy topmost head
The thick-set hazel dies ;
Long, ere the hateful crow shall tread
The corners of thine eyes ;
Live long, nor feel in head or chest
Our changeful equinoxes,
Till mellow Death, like some late guest,
Shall call thee from the boxes.

But when he calls, and thou shalt cease
To pace the gritted floor,
And, laying down an unctuous lease
Of life, shalt earn no more :
No carved cross-bones, the types of Death,
Shall show thee past to Heaven ;
But carved cross-pipes, and, underneath,
A pint-pot, neatly graven

LADY CLARE.



LORD RONALD courted Lady Clare,
I trow they did not part in scorn ;
Lord Ronald, her cousin, courted her,
And they will wed the morrow morn.

“ He does not love me for my birth,
Nor for my lands so broad and fair ;
He loves me for my own true worth,
And that is well,” said Lady Clare.

In there came old Alice the nurse,
Said, “ Who was this that went from thee ? ”
“ It was my cousin,” said Lady Clare,
“ To-morrow he weds with me.”

“ O God be thanked ! ” said Alice the nurse,
“ That all comes round so just and fair :
Lord Ronald is heir of all your lands,
And you are not the Lady Clare.”

“Are ye out of your mind, my nurse, my nurse?”

Said Lady Clare, “that ye speak so wild?”

“As God’s above,” said Alice the nurse,

“I speak the truth : you are my child.

“The old Earl’s daughter died at my breast ,

I speak the truth as I live by bread !

I buried her like my own sweet child,

And put my child in her stead.”

“Falsely, falsely have ye done,

O mother,” she said, “if this be true,

To keep the best man under the sun

So many years from his due ”

“Nay now, my child,” said Alice the nurse,

“But keep the secret for your life,

And all you have will be Lord Ronald’s

When you are man and wife.”

“If I’m a beggar born,” she said,

“I will speak out, for I dare not lie.

Pull off, pull off the brooch of gold,

And fling the diamond necklace by.”

“Nay now, my child,” said Alice the nurse,
“But keep the secret all ye can.”
She said “Not so : but I will know
If there be any faith in man.”

“Nay now, what faith ?” said Alice the nurse
“The man will cleave unto his right.”
“And he shall have it,” the lady replied,
“Though I should die to-night.”

“Yet give one kiss to your mother dear !
Alas, my child, I sinned for thee.”
“O mother, mother, mother,” she said,
“So strange it seems to me.

“Yet here ’s a kiss for my mother dear,
My mother dear, if this be so,
And lay your hand upon my head,
And bless me, mother, ere I go.”

She clad herself in a russet gown,
She was no longer Lady Clare :
She went by dale, and she went by down
With a single rose in her hair.

A lily-white doe Lord Ronald had brought
Leapt up from where she lay,
Dropt her head in the maiden's hand,
And followed her all the way.

Down stept Lord Ronald from his tower :
" O Lady Clare, you shame your worth !
Why come you drest like a village maid,
That are the flower of the earth ? "

" If I come drest like a village maid,
I am but as my fortunes are :
I am a beggar born," she said,
" And not the Lady Clare."

" Play me no tricks," said Lord Ronald,
" For I am yours in word and deed.
Play me no tricks," said Lord Ronald,
" Your riddle is hard to read."

O and proudly stood she up !
Her heart within her did not fail :
She looked into Lord Ronald's eyes,
And told him all her nurse's tale.

He laughed a laugh of merry scorn :
He turned and kissed her where she stood :
"If you are not the heiress born,
And I," said he, "the next in blood —

"If you are not the heiress born,
And I," said he, "the lawful heir,
We two will wed to-morrow morn,
And you shall still be Lady Clare."

THE LORD OF BURLEIGH.

In her ear he whispers gayly,
 " If my heart by signs can tell,
Maiden, I have watched thee daily,
 And I think thou lov'st me well."
She replies, in accents fainter,
 " There is none I love like thee."
He is but a landscape-painter,
 And a village maiden she.
He to lips, that fondly falter,
 Presses his without reproof ;
Leads her to the village altar,
 And they leave her father's roof.
" I can make no marriage present ;
 Little can I give my wife.
Love will make our cottage pleasant,
 And I love thee more than life."

They by parks and lodges going
See the lordly castles stand :
Summer woods, about them blowing,
Made a murmur in the land.
From deep thought himself he rouses,
Says to her that loves him well,
"Let us see these handsome houses
Where the wealthy nobles dwell."
So she goes by him attended,
Hears him lovingly converse,
Sees whatever fair and splendid
Lay betwixt his home and hers ;
Parks with oak and chestnut shady,
Parks and ordered gardens great,
Ancient homes of lord and lady,
Built for pleasure and for state.
All he shows her makes him dearer :
Evermore she seems to gaze
On that cottage growing nearer,
Where they twain will spend their days.
O but she will love him truly !
He shall have a cheerful home ;
She will order all things duly,
When beneath his roof they come.

Thus her heart rejoices greatly,
Till a gateway she discerns
With armorial bearings stately,
And beneath the gate she turns ;
Sees a mansion more majestic
Than all those she saw before ;
Many a gallant gay domestic
Bows before him at the door.
And they speak in gentle murmur,
When they answer to his call,
While he treads with footsteps firmer,
Leading on from hall to hall.
And, while now she wonders blindly,
Nor the meaning can divine,
Proudly turns he round and kindly,
" All of this is mine and thine."
Here he lives in state and bounty,
Lord of Burleigh, fair and free,
Not a lord in all the county
Is so great a lord as he.
All at once the color flushes
Her sweet face from brow to chin :
As it were with shame she blushes,
And her spirit changed within.

Then her countenance all over
Pale again as death did prove :
But he clasped her like a lover,
And he cheered her soul with love.
So she strove against her weakness,
Though at times her spirit sank :
Shaped her heart with woman's meekness
To all duties of her rank :
And a gentle consort made he,
And her gentle mind was such
That she grew a noble lady,
And the people loved her much.
But a trouble weighed upon her,
And perplexed her, night and morn,
With the burthen of an honor
Unto which she was not born.
Faint she grew, and ever fainter,
As she murmured, " O, that he
Were once more that landscape-painter,
Which did win my heart from me ! "
So she drooped and drooped before him,
Fading slowly from his side :
Three fair children first she bore him,
Then before her time she died.

Weeping, weeping late and early,
Walking up and pacing down,
Deeply mourned the Lord of Burleigh,
Burleigh-house by Stamford town.
And he came to look upon her,
And he looked at her and said,
"Bring the dress, and put it on her,
That she wore when she was wed."
Then her people, softly treading,
Bore to earth her body, drest
In the dress that she was wed in,
That her spirit might have rest.

SIR LAUNCELOT AND QUEEN GUINEVERE.

A FRAGMENT.

—●—

LIKE souls that balance joy and pain,
With tears and smiles from heaven again
The maiden Spring upon the plain
Came in a sun-lit fall of rain.

 In crystal vapor everywhere
Blue isles of heaven laughed between,
And, far in forest-deeps unseen,
The topmost linden gathered green
 From draughts of balmy air.

Sometimes the linnet piped his song :
Sometimes the throstle whistled strong :
Sometimes the sparrowhawk, wheeled along,
Hushed all the groves from fear of wrong :
 By grassy capes with fuller sound

In curves the yellowing river ran,
And drooping chestnut-buds began
To spread into the perfect fan,
 Above the teeming ground.

Then, in the boyhood of the year,
Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere
Rode through the coverts of the deer,
With blissful treble ringing clear.

 She seemed a part of joyous Spring :

A gown of grass-green silk she wore,
Buckled with golden clasps before ;
A light-green tuft of plumes she bore
 Closed in a golden ring.

Now on some twisted ivy-net,
Now by some tinkling rivulet,
On mosses thick with violet,
Her cream-white mule his pastern set :

 And now more fleet she skimmed the plains
Than she whose elfin prancer springs
By night to eery warblings,
When all the glimmering moorland rings
 With jingling bridle-reins.

As she fled fast through sun and shade,
The happy winds upon her played,
Blowing the ringlet from the braid :
She looked so lovely, as she swayed
 The rein with dainty finger-tips,
A man had given all other bliss,
And all his worldly worth for this,
To waste his whole heart in one kiss
 Upon her perfect lips.

A FAREWELL.

Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,
Thy tribute wave deliver :
No more by thee my steps shall be
Forever and forever.

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea
A rivulet then a river :
Nowhere by thee my steps shall be,
Forever and forever.

But here will sigh thine alder tree
And here thine aspen shiver ;
And here by thee will hum the bee
Forever and forever.

A thousand suns will stream on thee,
A thousand moons will quiver ;
But not by thee my steps shall be,
Forever and forever.

THE BEGGAR MAID.

HER arms across her breast she laid ;
She was more fair than words can say :
Bare-footed came the beggar maid
Before the King Cophetua.
In robe and crown the king stepped down,
To meet and greet her on her way ;
"It is no wonder," said the lords,
"She is more beautiful than day."

As shines the moon in clouded skies ;
She in her poor attire was seen :
One praised her ankles, one her eyes,
One her dark hair and lovesome mien.
So sweet a face, such angel grace,
In all that land had never been :
Cophetua swore a royal oath :
"This beggar maid shall be my queen !"

THE VISION OF SIN.

I HAD a vision when the night was late :
A youth came riding toward a palace-gate.
He rode a horse with wings that would have flown,
But that his heavy rider kept him down.
And from the palace came a child of sin,
And took him by the curls, and led him in,
Where sat a company with heated eyes,
Expecting when a fountain should arise :
A sleepy light upon their brows and lips —
As when the sun, a crescent of eclipse,
Dreams over lake and lawn, and isles and capes —
Suffused them, sitting, lying, languid shapes,
By heaps of gourds, and skins of wine, and piles of grapes.

Then methought I heard a mellow sound,
Gathering up from all the lower ground ;
Narrowing in to where they sat assembled,
Low voluptuous music winding trembled,

Woven in circles: they that heard it sighed,
Panted hand in hand with faces pale,
Swung themselves, and in low tones replied ;
Till the fountain spouted, showering wide
Sleet of diamond-drift and pearly hail ;
Then the music touched the gates and died ;
Rose again from where it seemed to fail,
Stormed in orbs of song, a growing gale ;
Till thronging in and in, to where they waited,
As 't were a hundred-throated nightingale,
The strong tempestuous treble throbbed and palpitated
Ran into its giddiest whirl of sound,
Caught the sparkles, and in circles,
Purple gauzes, golden hazes, liquid mazes,
Flung the torrent rainbow round ;
Then they started from their places,
Moved with violence, changed in hue,
Caught each other with wild grimaces,
Half-invisible to the view,
Wheeling with precipitate paces
To the melody, till they flew,
Hair, and eyes, and limbs, and faces,
Twisted hard in fierce embraces,
Like to Furies, like to Graces,
Dashed together in blinding dew :
Till, killed with some luxurious agony

The nerve-dissolving melody
Fluttered headlong from the sky.

And then I looked up toward a mountain-tract,
That girt the region with high cliff and lawn :
I saw that every morning, far withdrawn
Beyond the darkness and the cataract,
God made himself an awful rose of dawn,
Unheeded : and detaching, fold by fold,
From those still heights, and, slowly drawing near,
A vapor heavy, hueless, formless, cold,
Came floating on for many a month and year,
Unheeded : and I thought I would have spoken,
And warned that madman ere it grew too late :
But, as in dreams, I could not. Mine was broken,
When that cold vapor touched the palace gate,
And linked again. I saw within my head
A gray and gap-toothed man as lean as death,
Who slowly rode across a withered heath,
And lighted at a ruined inn, and said :

“ Wrinkled ostler, grim and thin !
Here is custom come your way ;
Take my brute, and lead him in,
Stuff his ribs with mouldy hay.

“ Bitter barmaid, waning fast !
See that sheets are on my bed ;
What ! the flower of life is past :
It is long before you wed.

“ Slip-shod waiter, lank and sour,
At The Dragon on the heath ?
Let us have a quiet hour,
Let us hob-and-nob with Death.

“ I am old, but let me drink ;
Bring me spices, bring me wine ;
I remember, when I think,
That my youth was half divine

“ Wine is good for shrivelled lips,
When a blanket wraps the day,
When the rotten woodland drips,
And the leaf is stamped in clay.

“ Sit thee down, and have no shame
Cheek by jowl, and knee by knee :
What care I for any name ?
What for order or degree ?

“ Let me screw thee up a peg :
Let me loose thy tongue with wine ·
Callest thou that thing a leg ?
Which is thinnest ? thine or mine ?

“ Thou shalt not be saved by works :
Thou hast been a sinner too :
Ruined trunks on withered forks,
Empty scarecrows, I and you !

“ Fill the cup, and fill the can :
Have a rouse before the morn :
Every minute dies a man,
Every minute one is born.

“ We are men of ruined blood ;
Therefore comes it we are wise.
Fish are we that love the mud,
Rising to no fancy-flies.

“ Name and fame ! to fly sublime
Through the courts, the camps, the schools,
Is to be the ball of Time,
Banded in the hands of fools.

“ Friendship ! — to be two in one —
Let the canting liar pack !
Well I know, when I am gone,
How she mouths behind my back.

“ Virtue ! — to be good and just —
Every heart, when sifted well,
Is a clot of warmer dust,
Mixed with cunning sparks of hell.

“ O ! we two as well can look
Whited thought and cleanly life
As the priest, above his book
Leering at his neighbor's wife.

“ Fill the cup, and fill the can :
Have a rouse before the morn :
Every minute dies a man,
Every minute one is born

“ Drink, and let the parties rave :
They are filled with idle spleen ,
Rising, falling, like a wave,
For they know not what they mean.

“ He that roars for liberty
Faster binds a tyrant's power ;
And the tyrant's cruel glee
Forces on the freer hour.

“ Fill the can, and fill the cup :
All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
And is lightly laid again.

“ Greet her with applausive breath,
Freedom, gayly doth she tread ;
In her right a civic wreath,
In her left a human head.

“ No, I love not what is new ;
She is of an ancient house :
And I think we know the hue
Of that cap upon her brows.

“ Let her go ! her thirst she slakes
Where the bloody conduit runs :
Then her sweetest meal she makes
On the first-born of her sons.

“ Drink to lofty hopes that cool —
 Visions of a perfect State :
Drink we, last, the public fool,
 Frantic love and frantic hate.

“ Chant me now some wicked stave,
 Till thy drooping courage rise,
And the glow-worm of the grave
 Glimmer in thy rheumy eyes.

“ Fear not thou to loose thy tongue ;
 Set thy hoary fancies free ;
What is loathsome to the young
 Savors well to thee and me.

“ Change, reverting to the years,
 When thy nerves could understand
What there is in loving tears,
 And the warmth of hand in hand.

“ Tell me tales of thy first love —
 April hopes, the fools of chance ;
Till the graves begin to move,
 And the dead begin to dance.

“ Fill the can, and fill the cup :
All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
And is lightly laid again.

“ Trooping from their mouldy dens
The chap-fallen circle spreads :
Welcome, fellow-citizens,
Hollow hearts and empty heads !

“ You are bones, and what of that ?
Every face, however full,
Padded round with flesh and fat,
Is but modelled on a skull.

“ Death is king, and Vivat Rex !
Tread a measure on the stones,
Madam — if I know your sex,
From the fashion of your bones.

“ No, I cannot praise the fire
In your eye — nor yet your lip :
All the more do I admire
Joints of cunning workmanship.

“Lo! God’s likeness — the ground-plan —
Neither modelled, glazed, or framed :
Buss me, thou rough sketch of man,
Far too naked to be shamed!

“Drink to Fortune, drink to Chance,
While we keep a little breath!
Drink to heavy Ignorance!
Hob-and-nob with brother Death!

“Thou art mazed, the night is long,
And the longer night is near :
What! I am not all as wrong
As a bitter jest is dear.

“Youthful hopes, by scores, to all,
When the locks are crisp and curled ;
Unto me my maudlin gall,
And my mockeries of the world.

“Fill the cup, and fill the can!
Mingle madness, mingle scorn!
Dregs of life, and lees of man :
Yet we will not die forlorn.”

The voice grew faint : there came a further change ;
Again arose the mystic mountain-range :
Below were men and horses pierced with worms,
And slowly quickening into lower forms ;
By shards and scurf of salt, and scum of dross,
Old splash of rains, and refuse patched with moss.
Then some one spake : " Behold ! it was a crime
Of sense avenged by sense that wore with time."
Another said : " The crime of sense became
The crime of malice, and is equal blame."
And one : " He had not wholly quenched his power ;
A little grain of conscience made him sour."
At last I heard a voice upon the slope
Cry to the summit, " Is there any hope ?"
To which an answer pealed from that high land,
But in a tongue no man could understand :
And on the glimmering limit far withdrawn
God made himself an awful rose of dawn.

BREAK, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, oh Sea !
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play !
O well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay !

And the stately ships go on
To the haven under the hill ;
But oh for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still !

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, oh Sea !
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

THE POET'S SONG.



THE rain had fallen, the Poet arose,
He passed by the town, and out of the street,
A light wind blew from the gates of the sun,
And waves of shadow went over the wheat,
And he sat him down in a lonely place,
And chanted a melody loud and sweet,
That made the wild-swan pause in her cloud,
And the lark drop down at his feet.

The swallow stopt as he hunted the bee,
The snake slipt under a spray,
The wild hawk stood with the down on his beak
And stared, with his foot on the prey,

And the nightingale thought, "I have sung many songs,
But never a one so gay,
For he sings of what the world will be
When the years have lied away."

THE PRINCESS.

A MEDLEY.

PROLOGUE.

SIR WALTER VIVIAN all a summer's day
Gave his broad lawns until the set of sun
Up to the people : thither flocked at noon
His tenants, wife and child, and thither half
The neighboring borough with their Institute,
Of which he was the patron. I was there
From college, visiting the son, — the son
A Walter, too, — with others of our set,
Five others : we were seven at Vivian-place.

And me that morning Walter showed the house,
Greek, set with busts : from vases in the hall
Flowers of all heavens, and lovelier than their names,
Grew side by side ; and on the pavement lay

Carved stones of the Abbey-ruin in the park,
Huge Ammonites, and the first bones of Time ;
And on the tables every clime and age
Jumbled together ; celts and calumets,
Claymore and snowshoe, toys in lava, fans
Of sandal, amber, ancient rosaries,
Laborious orient ivory sphere in sphere,
The cursed Malayan crease, and battle-clubs
From the isles of palm : and higher on the walls,
Betwixt the monstrous horns of elk and deer,
His own forefathers' arms and armor hung.

And " this," he said, " was Hugh's at Agincourt ;
And that was old Sir Ralph's at Ascalon :
A good knight he ! we keep a chronicle
With all about him," — which he brought, and I
Dived in a hoard of tales that dealt with knights
Half-legend, half-historic, counts and kings
Who laid about them at their wills and died ;
And mixt with these, a lady, one that armed
Her own fair head, and sallying through the gate,
Had beat her foes with slaughter from her walls.

And, I all rapt in this, " Come out," he said,
" To the Abbey : there is Aunt Elizabeth

And sister Lilia with the rest." We went
(I kept the book and had my finger in it)
Down through the park : strange was the sight to me ;
For all the sloping pasture murmured, sown
With happy faces and with holiday.
There moved the multitude, a thousand heads :
The patient leaders of their Institute
Taught them with facts. One reared a font of stone,
And drew, from butts of water on the slope,
The fountain of the moment, playing now
A twisted snake, and now a rain of pearls,
Or steep-up spout whereon the gilded ball
Danced like a wisp : and somewhat lower down
A man with knobs and wires and vials fired
A cannon : Echo answered in her sleep
From hollow fields : and here were telescopes
For azure views ; and there a group of girls
In circle waited, whom the electric shock
Dislinked with shrieks and laughter : round the lake
A little clock-work steamer paddling plied
And shook the lilies : perched about the knolls
A dozen angry models jettied steam :
A petty railway ran : a fire-balloon
Rose gem-like up before the dusky groves
And dropt a fairy parachute and past :

And there through twenty posts of telegraph
They flashed a saucy message to and fro
Between the mimic stations ; so that sport
With Science hand in hand went ; elsewhere
Pure sport : a herd of boys with clamor bowled
And stumped the wicket ; babies rolled about
Like tumbled fruit in grass ; and men and maids
Arranged a country dance, and flew through light
And shadow, while the twangling violin
Struck up with Soldier-laddie, and overhead
The broad ambrosial aisles of lofty lime
Made noise with bees and breeze from end to end.

Strange was the sight and smacking of the time ;
And long we gazed, but satiated at length
Came to the ruins. High-arched and ivy-claspt,
Of finest Gothic, lighter than a fire,
Through one wide chasm of time and frost they gave
The park, the crowd, the house ; but all within
The sward was trim as any garden lawn :
And here we lit on Aunt Elizabeth,
And Lilia with the rest, and lady friends
From neighbor seats : and there was Ralph himself,
A broken statue propt against the wall,
As gay as any. Lilia, wild with sport,
Half child, half woman as she was, had wound

A scarf of orange round the stony helm,
And robed the shoulders in a rosy silk,
That made the old warrior from his ivied nook
Glow like a sunbeam : near his tomb a feast
Shone, silver-set ; about it lay the guests,
And there we joined them : then the maiden Aunt
Took this fair day for text, and from it preached
An universal culture for the crowd,
And all things great ; but we, unworthier, told
Of college : he had climbed across the spikes,
And he had squeezed himself betwixt the bars,
And he had breathed the Proctor's dogs ; and one
Discussed his tutor, rough to common men
But honeying at the whisper of a lord ;
And one the Master, as a rogue in grain
Veneered with sanctimonious theory.

But while they talked, above their heads I saw
The feudal warrior lady-clad ; which brought
My book to mind ; and opening this, I read
Of old Sir Ralph a page or two that rang
With tilt and tourney ; then the tale of her
That drove her foes with slaughter from her walls,
And much I praised her nobleness, and " Where,"
Asked Walter, patting Lilia's head, (she lay
Beside him,) " lives there such a woman now ?"

Quick answered Lilia, "There are thousands now
Such women, but convention beats them down :
It is but bringing up ; no more than that :
You men have done it : how I hate you all !
Ah, were I something great ! I wish I were
Some mighty poetess, I would shame you then,
That love to keep us children ! O, I wish
That I were some great Princess, I would build
Far off from men a college like a man's,
And I would teach them all that men are taught ;
We are twice as quick !" And here she shook aside
The hand that played the patron with her curls.

And one said, smiling, "Pretty were the sight
If our old halls could change their sex, and flaunt
With prudes for proctors, dowagers for deans,
And sweet girl-graduates in their golden-hair.
I think they should not wear our rusty gowns,
But move as rich as Emperor-moths, or Ralph
Who shines so in the corner ; yet I fear,
If there were many Lilies in the brood,
However deep you might embower the nest,
Some boy would spy it."

At this upon the sward

She tapt her tiny silken-sandaled foot :
 "That's your light way ; but I would make it death
 For any male thing but to peep at us."

Petulant she spoke, and at herself she laughed ;
 A rosebud set with little wilful thorns,
 And sweet as English air could make her, she :
 But Walter hailed a score of names upon her,
 And "petty Ogress," and "ungrateful Puss,"
 And swore he longed at college, only longed,
 All else was well, for she-society.
 They boated and they cricketed ; they talked
 At wine, in clubs, of art, of politics ;
 They lost their weeks ; they vert the souls of deans ;
 They rode ; they betted ; made a hundred friends,
 And caught the blossom of the flying terms,
 But missed the mignonette of Vivian-place,
 The little hearth-flower Lilia. Thus he spoke,
 Part banter, part affection.

"True," she said,
 "We doubt not that. O yes, you missed us much.
 I'll stake my ruby ring upon it you did."

She held it out ; and as a parrot turns
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Up through gilt wires a crafty loving eye,
 And takes a lady's finger with all care,
 And bites it for true heart, and not for harm,
 So he with Lilia's. Daintily she shrieked
 And wrung it. "Doubt my word again!" he said.
 "Come, listen! here is proof that you were missed:
 We seven stayed at Christmas up to read;
 And there we took one tutor as to read:
 The hard-grained Muses of the cube and square
 Were out of season: never man, I think,
 So mouldered in a sinecure as he:
 For while our cloisters echoed frosty feet,
 And our long walks were stript as bare as brooms,
 We did but talk you over, pledge you all
 In wassail: often, like as many girls —
 Sick for the hollies and the yews of home —
 As many little trifling Lilies — played
 Charades and riddles as at Christmas here,
 And *what's my thought* and *when* and *where* and *how*
 And often told a tale from mouth to mouth
 As here at Christmas."

She remembered that:

A pleasant game, she thought: she liked it more
 Than magic music, forfeits, all the rest.
 But these — what kind of tales did men tell men,
 She wondered, by themselves?

A half-disdain

Perched on the pouted blossom of her lips :
And Walter nodded at me ; "*He* began,
The rest would follow, each in turn ; and so
We forged a seven-fold story. Kind ? what kind ?
Chimeras, crotchets, Christmas solecisms,
Seven-headed monsters only made to kill
Time by the fire in winter."

"Kill him now,
The tyrant ! kill him in the summer too,"
Said Liliá ; "Why not now," the maiden Aunt.
"Why not a summer's as a winter's tale ?
A tale for summer, as befits the time ;
And something it should be to suit the place,
Heroic, for a hero lies beneath,
Grave, solemn !"

Walter warped his mouth at this
To something so mock-solemn, that I laughed,
And Lilia woke with sudden-shrilling mirth
An echo, like an April woodpecker,
Hid in the ruins ; till the maiden Aunt
(A little sense of wrong had touched her face
With color) turned to me with "As you will —
Heroic if you will, or what you will,
Or be yourself your hero if you will."

“Take Lilia, then, for heroine,” clamored he,
 “And make her some great Princess, six feet high
 Grand, epic, homicidal; and be you
 The Prince to win her!”

“Then follow me, the Prince,”

I answered; “each be hero in his turn;
 Seven and yet one, like shadows in a dream.—
 Heroic seems our Princess as required.—
 But something made to suit with time and place,
 A Gothic ruin, and a Grecian house,
 A talk of college and of ladies’ rights;
 A feudal knight in silken masquerade,
 And, yonder, shrieks and strange experiments,
 For which the good Sir Ralph had burnt them all,—
 This *were* a medley! we should have him back
 Who told the ‘Winter’s tale,’ to do it for us.
 No matter: we will say whatever comes.
 And let the ladies sing us, if they will,
 From time to time, some ballad, or a song,
 To give us breathing-space.”

So I began,

And the rest followed; and the women sang
 Between the rougher voices of the men,
 Like linnets in the pauses of the wind:
 And here I give the story and the songs.

1.

A PRINCE I was, blue-eyed, and fair in face,
Of temper amorous, as the first of May,
With lengths of yellow ringlet, like a girl,
For on my cradle shone the northern star.

There lived an ancient legend in our house.
Some sorcerer, whom a far-off grandsire burnt
Because he cast no shadow, had foretold,
Dying, that none of all our blood should know
The shadow from the substance, and that one
Should come to fight with shadows, and to fall.
For so, my mother said, the story ran.
And, truly, waking dreams were, more or less,
An old and strange affection of the house.
Myself too had weird seizures, Heaven knows what
On a sudden, in the midst of men and day,
And while I walked and talked as heretofore,
I seemed to move among a world of ghosts,
And feel myself the shadow of a dream.

Our great court-Galen poised his gilt-head cane,
And pawed his beard, and called it catalepsy.
My mother pitying made a thousand prayers ;
My mother was as mild as any saint,
Half-canonized by all that looked on her,
So gracious was her tact and tenderness :
But my good father thought a king a king .
He cared not for the affection of the house ;
He held his sceptre like a pedant's wand
To lash offence, and with long arms and hands
Reached out, and picked offenders from the mass
For judgment.

Now it chanced that I had been,
While life was yet in bud and blade, betrothed
To one, a neighboring Princess ; she to me
Was proxy-wedded with a bootless calf
At eight years old ; and still from time to time
Came murmurs of her beauty from the South,
And of her brethren, youths of puissance ;
And still I wore her picture by my heart,
And one dark tress ; and all around them both
Sweet thoughts would swarm, as bees about their queen

But when the days drew nigh that I should wed,
My father sent ambassadors with furs

And jewels, gifts, to fetch her : these brought back
A present, a great labor of the loom ;
And therewithal an answer vague as wind :
Besides, they saw the king ; he took the gifts :
He said there was a compact ; that was true :
But then she had a will ; was he to blame ?
And maiden fancies ; loved to live alone
Among her women : certain would not wed.

That morning in the presence-room I stood
With Cyril and with Florian, my two friends :
The first, a gentleman of broken means,
(His father's fault,) but given to starts and bursts
Of revel ; and the last, my other heart,
And almost my half-self, for still we moved
Together, twinned, as horse's ear and eye.

Now while they spake I saw my father's face
Grow long and troubled, like a rising moon,
Inflamed with wrath : he started on his feet,
Tore the king's letter, snowed it down, and rent
The wonder of the loom through warp and woof.
From skirt to skirt ; and at the last he sware
That he would send a hundred thousand men,
And bring her in a whirlwind ; then he chewed

The thrice-turned cud of wrath, and cooked his spleen,
Communing with his captains of the war.

At last I spoke. "My father, let me go.
It cannot be but some gross error lies
In this report, this answer of a king,
Whom all men rate as kind and hospitable:
Or, maybe, I myself, my bride once seen,
Whate'er my grief to find her less than fame,
May rue the bargain made." And Florian said:
"I have a sister at the foreign court,
Who moves about the Princess; she, you know,
Who wedded with a nobleman from thence:
He, dying lately, left her, as I hear,
The lady of three castles in that land.
Through her this matter might be sifted clean."
And Cyril whispered: "Take me with you too."
Then, laughing, "What if these weird seizures come
Upon you in those lands, and no one near
To point you out the shadow from the truth!
Take me: I'll serve you better in a strait;
I grate on rusty hinges here:" but "No!"
Roared the rough king, "you shall not; we ourself
Will crush her pretty maiden fancies dead
In iron gauntlets: break the council up."

But when the council broke, I rose and passed
Through the wild woods that hung about the town ;
Found a still place, and plucked her likeness out ;
Laid it on flowers, and watched it lying bathed
In the green gleam of dewy-tasselled trees :
What were those fancies ? wherefore break her troth ?
Proud looked the lips : but while I meditated,
A wind arose, and rushed upon the South,
And shook the songs, the whispers, and the shrieks
Of the wild woods together ; and a Voice
Went with it, " Follow, follow, thou shalt win."

Then, ere the silver sickle of that month
Became her golden shield, I stole from court
With Cyril and with Florian, unperceived,
Cat-footed through the town, and half in dread
To hear my father's clamor at our backs,
With Ho ! from some bay-window shake the night
But all was quiet : from the bastioned walls
Like threaded spiders, one by one, we dropt,
And flying reached the frontier ; then we cross'd
To a livelier land ; and so, by tilth and grange
And vines, and blowing bosks of wilderness,
We gained the mother-city thick with towers,
And in the imperial palace found the king.

His name was Gama ; cracked and small his voice,
But bland the smile that like a wrinkling wind
On glassy water drove his cheek in lines ;
A little dry old man, without a star,
Not like a king : three days he feasted us,
And on the fourth I spake of why we came,
And my betrothed. " You do us, Prince," he said,
Airing a snowy hand and signet gem,
" All honor. We remember love ourselves
In our sweet youth: there did a compact pass
Long summers back, a kind of ceremony—
I think the year in which our olives failed.
I would you had her, Prince, with all my heart,
With my full heart : but there were widows here,
Two widows, Lady Psyche, Lady Blanche ;
They fed her theories, in and out of place,
Maintaining that with equal husbandry
The woman were an equal to the man.
They harped on this ; with this our banquets rang ;
Our dances broke and buzzed in knots of talk ;
Nothing but this : my very ears were hot
To hear them : knowledge, so my daughter held,
Was all in all ; they had but been, she thought,
As children ; they must lose the child, assume
The woman ; then, Sir, awful odes she wrote,

Too awful, sure, for what they treated of,
But all she is and does is awful; odes
About this losing of the child; and rhymes
And dismal lyrics, prophesying change
Beyond all reason: these the women sang;
And they that know such things — I sought but peace.
No critic I — would call them masterpieces:
They mastered me. At last she begged a boon,
A certain summer palace which I have
Hard by your father's frontier: I said no,
Yet being an easy man, gave it; and there,
All wild to found an University
For maidens, on the spur she fled; and more
We know not, — only this: they see no men,
Not even her brother Arac, nor the twins
Her brethren, though they love her, look upon her
As on a kind of paragon; and I
(Pardon me saying it) were much loth to breed
Dispute betwixt myself and mine: but since
(And I confess with right) you think me bound
In some sort, I can give you letters to her;
And yet, to speak the truth, I rate your chance
Almost at naked nothing."

Thus the king;
And I, though nettled that he seemed to slur

With garrulous ease and oily courtesies
Our formal compact, yet, not less (all frets
But chafing me on fire to find my bride)
Went forth again with both my friends. We rode
Many a long league back to the North. At last
From hills that looked across a land of hope
We dropt with evening on a rustic town
Set in a gleaming river's crescent-curve,
Close at the boundary of the liberties ;
There entered an old hostel, called mine host
To council, plied him with his richest wines,
And showed the late-writ letters of the king.

He, with a long, low sibilation, stared
As blank as death in marble ; then exclaimed,
Averring it was clear against all rules
For any man to go : but as his brain
Began to mellow, " If the king," he said,
" Had given us letters, was he bound to speak ?
The king would bear him out ;" and at the last —
The summer of the vine in all his veins —
" No doubt that we might make it worth his while.
She once had passed that way ; he heard her speak ;
She scared him ; life ! he never saw the like ;
She looked as grand as doomsday, and as grave :

And he, he revered his liege-lady there ;
He always made a point to post with mares ;
His daughter and his housemaid were the boys :
The land he understood for miles about
Was tilled by women ; all the swine were sows
And all the dogs " —

But while he jested thus,
A thought flashed through me, which I clothed in act,
Remembering how we three presented Maid,
Or Nymph, or Goddess, at high tide of feast,
In masque or pageant at my father's court.
We sent mine host to purchase female gear ;
He brought it, and himself, a sight to shake
The midriff of despair with laughter, help
To lace us up, till, each, in maiden plumes
We rustled : him we gave a costly bribe
To guerdon silence, mounted our good steeds,
And boldly ventured on the liberties.

We followed up the river as we rode,
And rode till midnight, when the college lights
Began to glitter firefly-like in copse
And linden alley ; then we past an arch,
Whereon a woman-statue rose with wings

From four winged horses dark against the stars,
And some inscription ran along the front,
But deep in shadow: further on we gained
A little street, half garden and half house;
But scarce could hear each other speak for noise
Of clocks and chimes, like silver hammers falling
On silver anvils, and the splash and stir
Of fountains spouted up and showering down
In meshes of the jasmine and the rose:
And all about us pealed the nightingale,
Rapt in her song, and careless of the snare.

There stood a bust of Pallas for a sign,
By two sphere lamps blazoned like Heaven and Earth
With constellation and with continent,
Above an entry: riding in, we called;
A plump-armed Ostleress and a stable wench
Came running at the call, and helped us down.
Then stepped a buxom hostess forth, and sailed
Full-blown before us into rooms which gave
Upon a pillared porch, the bases lost
In laurel: her we asked of that and this,
And who were tutors. "Lady Blanche," she said,
"And Lady Psyche." "Which was prettiest,
Best-natured?" "Lady Psyche." "Hers are we,"

One voice, we cried ; and I sat down and wrote,
In such a hand as when a field of corn
Bows all its ears before the roaring East ;

“ Three ladies of the Northern empire pray
Your Highness would enroll them with your own,
As Lady Psyche’s pupils.”

This I sealed :

The seal was Cupid bent above a scroll,
And o’er his head Uranian Venus hung,
And raised the blinding bandage from his eyes :
I gave the letter to be sent with dawn ;
And then to bed, where half in doze I seemed
To float about a glimmering night, and watch
A full sea glazed with muffled moonlight, swell
On some dark shore just seen that it was rich.*

As through the land at eve we went,
And plucked the ripened ears,
We fell out, my wife and I,
O, we fell out, I know not why,
And kissed again with tears.

For when we came where lies the child
We lost in other years,
There above the little grave,
O, there above the little grave.
We kissed again with tears.

II.

At break of day the College Portress came ;
She brought us Academic silks, in hue
The lilac, with a silken hood to each,
And zoned with gold ; and now when these were on,
And we as rich as moths from dusk cocoons,
She, curtseying her obeisance, let us know
The Princess Ida waited : out we paced,
I first, and following through the porch that sang
All round with laurel, issued in a court
Compact of lucid marbles, bossed with lengths
Of classic frieze, with ample awnings gay
Betwixt the pillars, and with great urns of flowers.
The Muses and the Graces, grouped in threes,
Enringed a billowing fountain in the midst :
And here and there on lattice edges lay
Or book or lute ; but hastily we past,
And up a flight of stairs into the hall.

There at a board by tome and paper sat,
With two tame leopards crouched beside her throne.

All beauty compassed in a female form,
 The Princess; liker to the inhabitant
 Of some clear planet close upon the Sun,
 Than our man's earth: such eyes were in her head,
 And so much grace and power, breathing down
 From over her arched brows, with every turn
 Lived through her to the tips of her long hands
 And to her feet. She rose her height, and said:

“We give you welcome: not without redound
 Of use and glory to yourselves ye come,
 The first-fruits of the stranger: aftertime,
 And that full voice which circles round the grave,
 Will rank you nobly, mingled up with me.
 What! are the ladies of your land so tall?”
 “We of the court,” said Cyril. “From the court?”
 She answered, “then ye know the Prince?” and he
 “The climax of his age: as though there were
 One rose in all the world, your Highness that,
 He worships your ideal:” and she replied:
 “We scarcely thought in our own hall to hear
 This barren verbiage, current among men,
 Light coin, the tinsel clink of compliment.
 Your flight from out your bookless wilds would seem
 As arguing love of knowledge and of power;
 Your language proves you still the child. Indeed

We dream not of him : when we set our hand
To this great work, we purposed with ourselves
Never to wed. You likewise will do well,
Ladies, in entering here, to cast and fling
The tricks, which make us toys of men, that so,
Some future time, if so indeed you will,
You may with those self-styled our lords ally
Your fortunes, justlier balanced, scale with scale."

At those high words, we, conscious of ourselves,
Perused the matting ; then an officer
Rose up and read the statutes, such as these :
Not for three years to correspond with home ;
Not for three years to cross the liberties ;
Not for three years to speak with any men ;
And many more, which hastily subscribed,
We entered on the boards : and " Now," she cried,
" Ye are green wood, see ye warp not. Look, our hall !
Our statues ! — not of those that men desire,
Sleek Odaliques, or oracles of mode,
Nor stunted squaws of West or East ; but she
That taught the Sabine how to rule, and she
The foundress of the Babylonian wall,
The Carian Artemisia strong in war,
The Rhodope that built the pyramid,
Clelia, Cornelia, with the Palmyrene

That fought Aurelian, and the Roman brows
Of Agrippina. Dwell with these, and lose
Convention, since to look on noble forms
Makes noble through the sensuous organism
That which is higher. O, lift your natures up:
Embrace our aims; work out your freedom. Girls,
Knowledge is now no more a fountain sealed:
Drink deep, until the habits of the slave,
The sins of emptiness, gossip, and spite,
And slander, die. Better not be at all
Than not be noble. Leave us: you may go:
To-day the Lady Psyche will harangue
The fresh arrivals of the week before;
For they press in from all the provinces,
And fill the hive."

She spoke, and, bowing, waved
Dismissal; back again we crost the court
To Lady Psyche's: as we entered in,
There sat along the forms, like morning doves
That sun their milky bosoms on the thatch,
A patient range of pupils; she herself
Erect behind a desk of satin-wood,
A quick brunette, well-moulded, falcon-eyed,
And on the hither side, or so she looked,

Of twenty summers. At her left, a child,
In shining draperies, headed like a star,
Her maiden babe, a double April old,
Aglaiā slept. We sat: the Lady glanced:
Then Florian, but no livelier than the dame
That whispered "Asses' ears" among the sedge,
"My sister." "Comely too by all that's fair,"
Said Cyril. "O, hush, hush!" and she began.

"This world was once a fluid haze of light,
Till toward the centre set the starry tides
And eddied into suns, that wheeling cast
The planets: then the monster, then the man;
'Tattooed or woaded, winter-clad in skins,
Raw from the prime, and crushing down his mate
As yet we find in barbarous isles, and here
Among the lowest."

Thereupon she took
A bird's-eye-view of all the ungracious past;
Glanced at the legendary Amazon
As emblematic of a nobler age;
Appraised the Lycian custom, spoke of those
That lay at wine with Lar and Lucumo;
Ran down the Persian, Grecian, Roman lines

Of empire, and the woman's state in each,
How far from just: till warming with her theme,
She fulminated out her scorn of laws Salique
And little-footed China, touched on Mahomet
With much contempt, and came to chivalry:
When some respect, however slight, was paid
To woman, superstition all awry:
However, then commenced the dawn: a beam
Had slanted forward, falling in a land
Of promise; fruit would follow. Deep, indeed,
Their debt of thanks to her who first had dared
To leap the rotten pales of prejudice,
Disyoke their necks from custom, and assert
None lordlier than themselves but that which made
Woman and man. She had founded; they must build
Here might they learn whatever men were taught:
Let them not fear: some said their heads were less:
Some men's were small; not they the least of men;
For often fineness compensated size:
Besides, the brain was like the hand, and grew
With using: thence the man's, if more was more;
He took advantage of his strength to be
First in the field: some ages had been lost;
But woman ripened earlier, and her life
Was longer; and albeit their glorious names

Were fewer, scattered stars, yet since in truth
The highest is the measure of the man,
And not the Caffre, Hottentot, Malay,
Nor those horn-handed breakers of the glebe,
But Homer, Plato, Verulam ; even so
With woman : and in arts of government,
Elizabeth and others ; arts of war,
The peasant Joan and others ; arts of grace,
Sappho and others vied with any man :
And, last not least, she who had left her place,
And bowed her state to them, that they might grow
To use and power on this Oasis, lapt
In the arms of leisure, sacred from the blight
Of ancient influence and scorn.

At last

She rose upon a wind of prophecy,
Dilating on the future ; " everywhere
Two heads in council, two beside the hearth,
Two in the tangled business of the world,
Two in the liberal offices of life,
Two plummetts dropt for one to sound the abyss
Of science, and the secrets of the mind :
Musician, painter, sculptor, critic, more :
And everywhere the broad and bounteous Earth

Should bear a double growth of those rare souls,
Poets, whose thoughts enrich the blood of the world."

She ended here, and beckoned us: the rest
Parted; and, glowing full-faced welcome, she
Began to address us, and was moving on
In gratulation, till as when a boat
Tacks, and the slackened sail flaps, all her voice
Faltering and fluttering in her throat, she cried,
"My brother!" "Well, my sister." "O," she said,
"What do you here? and in this dress? and these?
Why, who are these? a wolf within the fold!
A pack of wolves! the Lord be gracious to me!
A plot, a plot, a plot to ruin all!"
"No plot, no plot," he answered. "Wretched boy,
How saw you not the inscription on the gate,
LET NO MAN ENTER IN ON PAIN OF DEATH?"
"And if I had," he answered, "who could think
The softer Adams of your Academe,
O, sister, Sirens though they be, were such
As chanted on the blanching bones of men?"
"But you will find it otherwise," she said.
"You jest; ill jesting with edge-tools! My vow
Binds me to speak, and O, that iron will,
That axe-like edge unturnable, our Head,

The Princess." "Well, then, Psyche, take my life,
And nail me like a weasel on a grange
For warning: bury me beside the gate,
And cut this epitaph above my bones ;
*Here lies a brother by a sister slain,
All for the common good of womankind.*"
"Let me die, too," said Cyril, "having seen
And heard the Lady Psyche."

I struck in :

"Albeit so masked, Madam, I love the truth ;
Receive it ; and in me behold the Prince
Your countryman, affianced years ago
To the Lady Ida : here, for here she was,
And thus (what other way was left) I came."
"O Sir, oh Prince, I have no country ; none ;
If any, this ; but none. Whate'er I was
Disrooted, what I am is grafted here.
Affianced, Sir ? love-whispers may not breathe
Within this vestal limit, and how should I,
Who am not mine, say, live : the thunderbolt
Hangs silent ; but prepare : I speak ; it falls."
"Yet pause ;" I said, "for that inscription there,
I think no more of deadly lurks therein
Than in a clapper clapping in a garth,

To scare the fowl from fruit: if more there be,
If more and acted on, what follows? war;
Your own work marred; for this your Academe,
Whichever side be Victor, in the halloo
Will topple to the trumpet down, and pass
With all fair theories only made to gild
A stormless summer." "Let the Princess judge
Of that," she said: "farewell, Sir — and to you,
I shudder at the sequel, but I go."

"Are you that Lady Psyche," I rejoined,
"The fifth in line from that old Florian,
Yet hangs his portrait in my father's hall
(The gaunt old Baron with his beetle brow
Sun-shaded in the heat of dusty fights)
As he bestrode my Grandsire, when he fell,
And all else fled: we point to it, and we say,
The loyal warmth of Florian is not cold,
But branches current yet in kindred veins."
"Are you that Psyche," Florian added, "she
With whom I sang about the morning hills,
Flung ball, flew kite, and raced the purple fly,
And snared the squirrel of the glen? are you
That Psyche, wont to bind my throbbing brow,
To smooth my pillow, mix the foaming draught

Of fever, tell me pleasant tales, and read
My sickness down to happy dreams? are you
That brother-sister Psyche, both in one?
You were that Psyche, but what are you now?"
"You are that Psyche," Cyril said, "for whom
I would be that forever which I seem,
A woman, if I might sit beside your feet,
And glean your scattered sapience."

Then once more,
"Are you that Lady Psyche," I began,
"That on her bridal morn before she past
From all her old companions, when the king
Kissed her pale cheek, declared that ancient ties
Would still be dear beyond the southern hills;
That were there any of our people there
In want or peril, there was one to hear
And help them? look! for such are these and I."
"Are you that Psyche," Florian asked, "to whom,
In gentler days, your arrow-wounded fawn
Came flying while you sat beside the well?
The creature laid his muzzle on your lap,
And sobbed, and you sobbed with it, and the blood
Was sprinkled on your kirtle, and you wept.
That was fawn's blood, not brother's, yet you wept

O by the bright head of my little niece,
 You were that Psyche, and what are you now?"
 "You are that Psyche," Cyril said again,
 "The mother of the sweetest little maid
 That ever crowed for kisses."

"Out upon it!"

She answered, "peace! and why should I not play
 The Spartan Mother with emotion, be
 The Lucius Junius Brutus of my kind?
 Him you call great: he for the common weal,
 The fading politics of mortal Rome,
 As I might slay this child, if good need were,
 Slew both his sons: and I, shall I, on whom
 The secular emancipation turns
 Of half this world, be swerved from right to save
 A prince, a brother? a little will I yield.
 Best so, perchance, for us, and well for you.
 O hard, when love and duty clash! I fear
 My conscience will not count me fleckless; yet—
 Hear my conditions: promise (otherwise
 You perish) as you came to slip away,
 To-day, to-morrow, soon: it shall be said,
 These women were too barbarous, would not learn;
 They fled, who might have shamed us: promise, all."

What could we else, we promised each ; and she
Like some wild creature, newly-caged, commenced
A to-and-fro, so pacing till she paused
By Florian ; holding out her lily arms,
Took both his hands, and smiling faintly said :
" I knew you at the first : though you have grown,
You scarce have altered : I am sad and glad
To see you, Florian. I give thee to death,
My brother ! it was duty spoke, not I.
My needful seeming harshness, pardon it.
Our mother, is she well ? "

With that she kissed
His forehead, then, a moment after, clung
About him, and betwixt them blossomed up
From out a common vein of memory
Sweet household talk, and phrases of the hearth,
And far allusion, till the gracious dews
Began to glisten and to fall : and while
They stood, so rapt, we gazing, came a voice,
" I brought a message here from Lady Blanche."
Back started she, and turning round we saw
The Lady Blanche's daughter where she stood,
Melissa, with her hand upon the lock,

A rosy blonde, and in a college gown
That clad her like an April daffodilly,
(Her mother's color,) with her lips apart,
And all her thoughts as fair within her eyes,
As bottom agates seem to wave and float
In crystal currents of clear morning seas.

So stood that same fair creature at the door.
Then Lady Psyche, " Ah — Melissa — you !
You heard us ?" and Melissa, " O pardon me !
I heard, I could not help it, did not wish :
But, dearest Lady, pray you fear me not,
Nor think I bear that heart within my breast,
To give three gallant gentlemen to death."
" I trust you," said the other, " for we two
Were always friends, none closer, elm and vine :
But yet your mother's jealous temperament —
Let not your prudence, dearest, drowse, o. prove
The Danaïd of a leaky vase, for fear
This whole foundation ruin, and I lose
My honor, these their lives." " Ah, fear me not,"
Replied Melissa, " no — I would not tell,
No, not for all Aspasia's cleverness,
No, not to answer, Madam, all those hard things
That Sheba came to ask of Solomon."

“Be it so,” the other, “that we still may lead
The new light up, and culminate in peace,
For Solomon may come to Sheba yet.”
Said Cyril, “Madam, he the wisest man,
Feasted the woman wisest then, in halls
Of Lebanonian cedar : nor should you
(Though madam *you* should answer, *we* would ask)
Less welcome find among us, if you came
Among us, debtors for our lives to you,
Myself for something more.” He said not what,
But “Thanks,” she answered, “go : we have been too long
Together : keep your hoods about the face ;
They do so that affect abstraction here.
Speak little ; mix not with the rest ; and hold
Your promise : all, I trust, may yet be well.”

We turned to go, but Cyril took the child,
And held her round the knees against his waist,
And blew the swollen cheek of a trumpeter,
While Psyche watched them, smiling, and the child
Pushed her flat hand against his face and laughed ;
And thus our conference closed.

And then we strolled
For half the day through stately theatres

Benched crescent-wise. In each we sat, we heard
The grave Professor. On the lecture slate
The circle rounded under female hands
With flawless demonstration : followed then
A classic lecture, rich in sentiment,
With scraps of thundrous Epic lilted out
By violet-hooded Doctors, elegies
And quoted odes, and jewels five-words-long,
That on the stretched forefinger of all Time
Sparkle forever : then we dipt in all
That treats of whatsoever is, the state,
The total chronicles of man, the mind,
The morals, something of the frame, the rock,
The star, the bird, the fish, the shell, the flower,
Electric, chemic laws, and all the rest,
And whatsoever can be taught and known ;
Till like three horses that have broken fence,
And glutted all night long breast-deep in corn,
We issued gorged with knowledge, and I spoke :
“ Why, Sirs, they do all this as well as we.”
“ They hunt old trails,” said Cyril, “ very well ;
But when did woman ever yet invent ? ”
“ Ungracious ! ” answered Florian, “ have you learnt
No more from Psyche’s lecture, you that talked
The trash that made me sick, and almost sad ? ”

“O trash,” he said, “but with a kernel in it.
Should I not call her wise who made me wise?
And learnt? I learnt more from her in a flash,
Than if my brainpan were an empty hull,
And every Muse tumbled a science in.
A thousand hearts lie fallow in these halls
And round these halls a thousand baby loves
Fly twanging headless arrows at the hearts,
Whence follows many a vacant pang; but oh
With me, Sir, entered in the bigger boy,
The Head of all the golden-shafted firm,
The long-limbed lad that had a Psyche too;
He cleft me through the stomacher; and now
What think you of it, Florian? do I chase
The substance or the shadow? will it hold?
I have no sorcerer’s malison on me,
No ghostly hauntings like his Highness. I
Flatter myself that always, everywhere,
I know the substance when I see it. Well,
Are castles shadows? Three of them? Is she
The sweet proprietress a shadow? If not,
Shall those three castles patch my tattered coat?
For dear are those three castles to my wants,
And dear is sister Psyche to my heart,
And two dear things are one of double worth,

And much I might have said, but that my zone
Unmanned me : then the Doctors ! O to hear
The Doctors ! O to watch the thirsty plants
Imbibing ! once or twice I thought to roar,
To break my chain, to shake my mane : but thou,
Modulate me, Soul of mincing mimicry !
Make liquid treble of that bassoon, my throat ;
Abase those eyes that ever loved to meet
Star-sisters answering under crescent brows ;
Abate the stride, which speaks of man, and loose
A flying charm of blushes o'er this cheek,
Where they like swallows coming out of time
Will wonder why they came : but hark the bell
For dinner, let us go ! ”

And in we streamed
Among the columns, pacing staid and still
By twos and threes, till all from end to end
With beauties every shade of brown and fair,
In colors gayer than the morning mist,
The long hall glittered like a bed of flowers.
How might a man not wander from his wits,
Pierced through with eyes, but that I kept mine own
Intent on her, who rapt in glorious dreams
The second-sight of some Astræan age,

Sat compassed with professors : they, the while,
Discussed a doubt, and tossed it to and fro :
A clamor thickened, mixed with inmost terms
Of art and science ; Lady Blanche alone,
Of faded form and haughtiest lineaments,
With all her Autumn tresses falsely brown,
Shot sidelong daggers at us, a tiger-cat
In act to spring.

At last a solemn grace
Concluded, and we sought the gardens : there
One walked reciting by herself, and one
In this hand held a volume as to read,
And smoothed a petted peacock down with that :
Some to a low song oared a shallop by,
Or under arches of the marble bridge
Hung, shadowed from the heat : some hid and sought
In the orange thickets : others tost a ball
Above the fountain-jets, and back again
With laughter : others lay about the lawns,
Of the older sort, and murmured that their May
Was passing : what was learning unto them ?
They wished to marry ; they could rule a house ;
Men hated learned women : but we three
Sat muffled like the Fates ; and often came

Melissa, hitting all we saw with shafts
Of gentle satire, kin to charity,
That harmed not : then day droopt ; the chapel bells
Called us : we left the walks ; we mixt with those
Six hundred maidens, clad in purest white,
Before two streams of light from wall to wall,
While the great organ almost burst his pipes
Groaning for power, and rolling through the court
A long melodious thunder to the sound
Of solemn psalms and silver litanies,
The work of Ida, to call down from Heaven
A blessing on her labors for the world.

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
 Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
 Wind of the western sea !
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
 Blow him again to me ;
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
 Father will come to thee soon ;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
 Father will come to thee soon ;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
 Under the silver moon ;
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

III.

MORN in the white wake of the morning star
Came furrowing all the orient into gold.
We rose, and each by other drest with care
Descended to the court that lay three parts
In shadow, but the Muses' heads were touched
Above the darkness from their native East.

There while we stood beside the fount, and watched
Or seemed to watch the dancing bubble, approached
Melissa, tinged with wan from lack of sleep,
Or grief, and glowing round her dewy eyes
The circled Iris of a night of tears ;
" And fly," she cried, " O fly, while yet you may !
My mother knows : " and when I asked her " how,"
" My fault," she wept, " my fault ! and yet not mine :
Yet mine in part. O hear me, pardon me !
My mother, 't is her wont from night to night
To rail at Lady Psyche and her side.
She says the Princess should have been the Head,
Herself and Lady Psyche the two arms ;
And so it was agreed when first they came ;

But Lady Psyche was the right hand now,
 And she the left, or not, or seldom used ;
 Hers more than half the students, all the love.
 And so last night she fell to canvass you :
Her countrywomen ! she did not envy her.
 ' Who ever saw such wild barbarians ?
 Girls ? — more like men ! ' and at these words the snake,
 My secret, seemed to stir within my breast ;
 And oh, Sirs, could I help it, but my cheek
 Began to burn and burn, and her lynx eye
 To fix and make me hotter, till she laughed :
 ' O marvellously modest maiden, you !
 Men ! girls, like men ! why, if they had been men,
 You need not set your thoughts in rubric thus
 For wholesale comment.' Pardon, I am shamed
 That I must needs repeat for my excuse
 What looks so little graceful : ' men ' (for still
 My mother went revolving on the word)
 ' And so they are, — very like men indeed —
 And with that woman closeted for hours.'
 Then came these dreadful words out one by one,
 ' Why — these — *are* — men : ' I shuddered : ' and you
 know it !'
 O ask me nothing, ' I said : ' And she knows too,
 And she conceals it ! ' So my mother clutched
 The truth at once, but with no word from me ;

And now thus early risen she goes to inform
The Princess : Lady Psyche will be crushed ;
But you may yet be saved, and therefore fly :
But heal me with your pardon ere you go."

" What pardon, sweet Melissa, for a blush ? "
Said Cyril : " Pale one, blush again : than wear
Those lilies, better blush our lives away.
Yet let us breathe for one hour more in Heaven,"
He added, " lest some classic Angel speak
In scorn of us, ' They mounted, Ganymedes,
To tumble, Vulcans, on the second morn.'
But I will melt this marble into wax
To yield us farther furlough : " and he went.

 Melissa shook her doubtful curls, and thought
He scarce would prosper. " Tell us," Florian asked
" How grew this feud betwixt the right and left."
" O long ago," she said, " betwixt these two
Division smoulders hidden : 't is my mother,
Too jealous, often fretful as the wind
Pent in a crevice : much I bear with her :
I never knew my father, but she says
(God help her!) she was wedded to a fool ;
And still she railed against the state of things.
She had the care of Lady Ida's youth,

And from the Queen's decease she brought her up
But when your sister came she won the heart
Of Ida : they were still together, grew
(For so they said themselves) inosculated ;
Consonant chords that shiver to one note :
One mind in all things : yet my mother still
Affirms your Psyche thieved her theories,
And angled with them for her pupil's love :
She calls her plagiarist ; I know not what :
But I must go : I dare not tarry," and light
As flies the shadow of a bird she fled.

Then murmured Florian, gazing after her :
" An open-hearted maiden, true and pure.
If I could love, why this were she : how pretty
Her blushing was, and how she blushed again,
As if to close with Cyril's random wish :
Not like your Princess crammed with erring pride,
Nor like poor Psyche whom she drags in tow."

" The crane," I said, " may chatter of the crane,
The dove may murmur of the dove, but I
An eagle clang an eagle to the sphere.
My Princess, oh my Princess ! true she errs,
But in her own grand way : being herself
Three times more noble than threescore of men

She sees herself in every woman else,
And so she wears her error like a crown
To blind the truth and me : for her, and her,
Hebes are they to hand ambrosia, mix
The nectar ; but — ah she — whene'er she moves
The Samian Herè rises and she speaks
A Memnon smitten with the morning Sun."

So saying, from the court we paced, and gained
The terrace ranged along the Northern front,
And leaning there on those balusters, high
Above the empurpled champaign, drank the gale
That blown about the foliage underneath,
And sated with the innumerable rose,
Beat balm upon our eyelids. Hither came
Cyril, and yawning, "O hard task!" he cried,
"No fighting shadows here! I forced a way
Through solid opposition, crabbed and gnarled.
Better to clear prime forests, heave and thump
A league of street in summer solstice down,
Than hammer at this reverend gentlewoman.
I knocked, and, bidden, entered; found her there
At point to move, and settled in her eyes
The green malignant light of coming storm.
Sir, I was courteous, every phrase well-oiled,

As man's could be ; yet maiden-meek I prayed
Concealment : she demanded who we were,
And why we came ? I fabled nothing fair,
But, your example pilot, told her all.
Up went the hushed amaze of hand and eye.
But when I dwelt upon your old affiance,
She answered sharply that I talked astray.
I urged the fierce inscription on the gate,
And our three lives. True — we had limed ourselves
With open eyes, and we must take the chance.
But such extremes, I told her, well might harm
The woman's cause. 'Not more than now,' she said,
'So puddled as it is with favoritism.'
I tried the mother's heart. Shame might befall
Melissa, knowing, saying not she knew :
Her answer was, 'Leave me to deal with that.'
I spoke of war to come and many deaths,
And she replied, her duty was to speak,
And duty duty, clear of consequences.
I grew discouraged, Sir ; but since I knew
No rock so hard but that a little wave
May beat admission in a thousand years,
I recommenced ; 'Decide not ere you pause.
I find you here but in the second place,
Some say the third — the authentic foundress you.

I offer boldly : we will seat you highest :
Wink at our advent : help my Prince to gain
His rightful bride, and here I promise you
Some palace in our own land, where you shall reign
The head and heart of all our fair she-world,
And your great name flow on with broadening time
Forever.' Well, she balanced this a little,
And told me she would answer us to-day,
Meantime be mute : thus much, nor more, I gained.'

He ceasing, came a message from the Head.
" That afternoon the Princess rode to take
The dip of certain strata to the North.
Would we go with her ? we should find the land
Worth seeing ; and the river made a fall
Out yonder : " then she pointed on to where
A double hill ran up his furrowy forks
Beyond the thick-leaved platans of the vale.

Agreed to, this, the day fled on through all
Its range of duties to the appointed hour.
Then summoned to the porch we went. She stood
Among her maidens, higher by the head,
Her back against a pillar, her foot on one
Of those tame leopards. Kittenlike he rolled

And pawed about her sandal. I drew near :
I gazed. On a sudden my strange seizure came
Upon me, the weird vision of our house :
The Princess Ida seemed a hollow show,
Her gay-furred cats a painted fantasy,
Her college and her maidens empty masks,
And I myself the shadow of a dream,
For all things were and were not. Yet I felt
My heart beat thick with passion and with awe,
Then from my breast the involuntary sigh
Broke, as she smote me with the light of eyes
That lent my knee desire to kneel, and shook
My pulses, till to horse we got, and so
Went forth in long retinue following up
The river as it narrowed to the hills.

I rode beside her, and to me she said :
"O friend, we trust that you esteemed us not
Too harsh to your companion yestermorn ;
Unwillingly we spake." "No — not to her,"
I answered, "but to one of whom we spake
Your Highness might have seemed the thing you say."
"Again?" she cried ; "are you ambassadors
From him to me? we give you, being strange,
A license : speak, and let the topic die."

I stammered that I knew him — could have wished —
“ Our king expects — was there no precontract —
There is no truer-hearted — ah, you seem
All he prefigured, and he could not see
The bird of passage flying south but longed
To follow : surely, if your Highness keep
Your purport, you will shock him even to death,
Or baser courses, children of despair.”

“ Poor boy,” she said, “ can he not read — no books ?
Quoit, tennis, ball — no games ? nor deals in that
Which men delight in, martial exercise ?
To nurse a blind ideal, like a girl,
Methinks he seems no better than a girl ;
As girls were once, as we ourselves have been :
We had our dreams ; perhaps he mixt with them :
We touch on our dead self, nor shun to do it,
Being other — since we learnt our meaning here,
To lift the woman’s fallen divinity
Upon an even pedestal with man.”

She paused, and added with a haughtier smile
“ And as to precontracts, we move, my friend,
At no man’s beck, but know ourselves and thee,
O Vashti, noble Vashti ! Summoned out

She kept her state, and left the drunken king
To brawl at Shushan underneath the palms."

"Alas! your Highness breathes full East," I said,
"On that which leans to you. I know the Prince,
I prize his truth: and then how vast a work
To assail this gray preëminence of man!
You grant me license; might I use it? think,
Ere half be done, perchance your life may fail;
Then comes the feebler heiress of your plan,
And takes and ruins all; and thus your pains
May only make that footprint upon sand
Which old-recurring waves of prejudice
Resmooth to nothing: might I dread that you,
With only Fame for spouse and your great deeds
For issue, yet may live in vain, and miss,
Meanwhile, what every woman counts her due,
Love, children, happiness?"

And she exclaimed,
"Peace, you young savage of the Northern wild!
What! though your Prince's love were like a God's,
Have we not made ourself the sacrifice?
You are bold indeed: we are not talked to thus:
Yet will we say for children, would they grew
Like field-flowers everywhere! we like them well:

But children die ; and let me tell you, girl,
Howe'er you babble, great deeds cannot die :
They with the sun and moon renew their light
Forever, blessing those that look on them :
Children — that men may pluck them from our hearts
Kill us with pity, break us with ourselves —
O — children — there is nothing upon earth
More miserable than she that has a son
And sees him err : nor would we work for fame ;
Though she perhaps might reap the applause of Great,
Who learns the one row stro whence after-hands
May move the world, though she herself effect
But little : wherefore up and act, nor shrink
For fear our solid aim be dissipated
By frail successors. Would, indeed, we had been,
In lieu of many mortal flies, a race
Of giants, living, each, a thousand years,
That we might see our own work out, and watch
The sandy footprint harden into stone."

I answered nothing, doubtful in myself
If that strange Poet-princess with her grand
Imaginations might at all be won.
And she broke out, interpreting my thoughts

“No doubt we seem a kind of monster to you :
We are used to that ; for women, up till this
Cramped under worse than South-sea-isle taboo,
Dwarfs of the gynecæum, fail so far
In high desire, they know not, cannot guess
How much their welfare is a passion to us.
If we could give them surer, quicker proof —
O, if our end were less achievable
By slow approaches than by single act
Of immolation, any phase of death,
We were as prompt to spring against the pikes,
Or down the fiery gulf, as talk of it,
To compass our dear sisters' liberties.”

She bowed as if to veil a noble tear ;
And up we came to where the river sloped
To plunge in cataract, shattering on black blocks
A breadth of thunder. O'er it shook the woods,
And danced the color, and, below, stuck out
The bones of some vast bulk that lived and roared
Before man was. She gazed a while and said,
“As these rude bones to us, are we to her
That will be.” “Dare we dream of that,” I asked,
“Which wrought us, as the workman and his work
That practice betters ?” “How,” she cried, “you love

The metaphysics ! read and earn our prize,
A golden broach : beneath an emerald plane
Sits Diotima, teaching him that died
Of hemlock ; our device ; wrought to the life ;
She rapt upon her subject, he on her :
For there are schools for all." " And yet," I said,
" Methinks I have not found among them all
One anatomic." " Nay, we thought of that,"
She answered, " but it pleased us not : in truth
We shudder but to dream our maids should ape
Those monstrous males that carve the living hound,
And cram him with the fragments of the grave,
Or in the dark dissolving human heart,
And holy secrets of this microcosm,
Dabbling a shameless hand with shameful jest,
Encarnalize their spirits : yet we know
Knowledge is knowledge, and this matter hangs :
Howbeit ourself, foreseeing casualty,
Nor willing men should come among us, learnt,
For many weary moons before we came,
This craft of healing. Were you sick, ourself
Would tend upon you. To your question now,
Which touches on the workman and his work.
Let there be light, and there was light : 't is so :
For was, and is, and will be, are but is ;

And all creation is one act at once,
The birth of light : but we that are not all,
As parts, can see but parts, now this, now that,
And live, perforce, from thought to thought, and make
One act a phantom of succession : thus
Our weakness somehow shapes the shadow, Time ;
But in the shadow will we work, and mould
The woman to the fuller day."

She spake

With kindled eyes : we rode a league beyond,
And o'er a bridge of pinewood crossing, came
On flowery levels underneath the crag,
Full of all beauty. "O how sweet," I said,
(For I was half oblivious of my mask,
"To linger here with one that loved us!" "Yea,"
She answered, "or with fair philosophies
That lift the fancy ; for indeed these fields
Are lovely, lovelier not the Elysian lawns,
Where paced the Demigods of old, and saw
The soft white vapor streak the crowned towers
Built to the Sun : " then, turning to her maids,
"Pitch our pavilion here upon the sward ;
Lay out the viands." At the word, they raised
A tent of satin, elaborately wrought
With fair Corinna's triumph : here she stood,

Engirt with many a florid maiden-cheek,
The woman-conqueror; woman-conquered there
The bearded Victor of ten thousand hymns,
And all the men mourned at his side: but we
Set forth to climb; then, climbing, Cyril kept
With Psyche, with Melissa Florian, I
With mine affianced. Many a little hand
Glanced like a touch of sunshine on the rocks,
Many a light foot shone like a jewel set
In the dark crag: and then we turned, we wound
About the cliffs, the copses, out and in,
Hammering and clinking, chattering stony names
Of shale and hornblende, rag and trap and tuff,
Amygdaloid and trachyte, till the Sun
Grew broader toward his death and fell, and all
The rosy heights came out above the lawns.

The splendor falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story ;
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying :
Blow, bugle ; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying

O hark, O hear ! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, further going :
O sweet and far, from cliff and scar,
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing !
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying :
Blow, bugle ; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river :
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow forever and forever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

IV.

"THERE sinks the nebulous star we call the Sun,
If that hypothesis of theirs be sound,"
Said Ida; "let us down and rest:" and we
Down from the lean and wrinkled precipices,
By every coppice-feathered chasm and cleft,
Dropt through the ambrosial gloom to where below
No bigger than a glow-worm, shone the tent
Lamp-lit from the inner. Once she leaned on me,
Descending; once or twice she lent her hand,
And blissful palpitations in the blood,
Stirring a sudden transport, rose and fell.

But when we planted level feet, and dipt
Beneath the satin dome and entered in,
There leaning deep in broidered down we sank
Our elbows: on a tripod in the midst
A fragrant flame rose, and before us glowed
Fruit, blossom, viand, amber wine and gold.

Then she, "Let some one sing to us ; lightlier move
The minutes fledged with music ;" and a maid,
Of those beside her, smote her harp, and sang :

"Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

"Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the underworld,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge ;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

"Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awakened birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square ;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

"Dear as remembered kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feigned
On lips that are for others ; deep as love,

Deep as first love, and wild with all regret ;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more."

She ended with such passion that the tear,
She sang of, shook and fell, an erring pearl
Lost in her bosom : but with some disdain
Answered the Princess, " If indeed there haunt
About the mouldered lodges of the Past
So sweet a voice and vague, fatal to men,
Well needs it we should cram our ears with wool
And so pace by : but thine are fancies hatched
In silken-folded idleness ; nor is it
Wiser to weep a true occasion lost,
But trim our sails, and let old by-gones be
While down the streams that float us each and all
To the issue, goes, like glittering bergs of ice,
Throne after throne, and molten on the waste
Becomes a cloud : for all things serve their time
Toward that great year of equal might and rights,
Nor would I fight with iron laws, in the end
Found golden : let the past be past ; let be
Their cancelled Babels : though the rough kex break
The starred mosaic, and the wild goat hang
Upon the shaft, and the wild fig-tree split
Their monstrous idols, care not while we hear

A trumpet in the distance pealing news
Of better, and Hope, a poisoning eagle, burns
Above the unrisen morrow: " then to me ;
" Know you no song of your own land," she said,
" Not such as moans about the retrospect,
But deals with the other distance and the hues
Of promise ; not a death's head at the wine."

Then I remembered one myself had made
What time I watched the swallow winging south
From mine own land, part made long since, and part
Now while I sang ; and maidenlike as far
As I could ape their treble, did I sing.

" O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying South,
Fly to her, and fall upon her gilded eaves,
And tell her, tell her what I tell to thee.

" O tell her, Swallow, thou that knowest each,
That bright and fierce and fickle is the South,
And dark and true and tender is the North.

" O Swallow, Swallow, if I could follow, and light
Upon her lattice, I would pipe and thrill,
And cheep and twitter twenty million loves.

“ O were I thou that she might take me in,
And lay me on her bosom, and her heart
Would rock the snowy cradle till I died.

“ Why lingereth she to clothe her heart with love,
Delaying as the tender ash delays
To clothe herself, when all the woods are green ?

“ O tell her, Swallow, that thy brood is flown :
Say to her, I do but wanton in the South,
But in the North long since my nest is made.

“ O tell her, brief is life but love is long,
And brief the sun of summer in the North,
And brief the moon of beauty in the South.

“ O Swallow, flying from the golden woods,
Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and make her mine,
And tell her, tell her; that I follow thee.”

I ceased, and all the ladies, each at each,
Like the Ithacensian suitors in old time,
Stared with great eyes, and laughed with alien lips,
And knew not what they meant ; for still my voice
Rang false : but smiling, “ Not for thee,” she said,

“ O Bulbul, any rose of Gulistan
Shall burst her veil : marsh-divers, rather, maid,
Shall croak thee sister, or the meadow-crake
Grate her harsh kindred in the grass : and this
A mere love-poem ! O for such, my friend,
We hold them slight : they mind us of the time
When we made bricks in Egypt. Knaves are men,
That lute and flute fantastic tenderness,
And dress the victim to the offering up,
And paint the gates of Hell with Paradise,
And play the slave to gain the tyranny.
Poor soul ! I had a maid of honor once ;
She wept her true eyes blind for such a one,
A rogue of canzonets and serenades.
I loved her. Peace be with her. She is dead.
So they blaspheme the muse ! but great is song
Used to great ends : ourself have often tried
Valkyrian hymns, or into rhythm have dashed
The passion of the prophetess : for song
Is duer unto freedom, force, and growth
Of spirit, than to junketing and love.
Love is it ? Would this same mock-love and this
Mock-Hymen were laid up like winter bats,
Till all men grew to rate us at our worth,
Not vassals to be beat, nor pretty babes

To be dandled, no, but living wills, and sphered
Whole in ourselves, and owed to none. Enough!
But now to leaven play with profit, you,
Know you no song, the true growth of your soil,
That gives the manners of your countrywomen?"

She spoke, and turned her sumptuous head with eyes
Of shining expectation fixt on mine.
Then while I dragged my brains for such a song,
Cyril, with whom the bell-mouthed flask had wrought,
Or mastered by the sense of sport, began
To troll a careless, careless tavern-catch
Of Moll and Meg, and strange experiences
Unmeet for ladies. Florian nodded at him,
[frowning; Psyche flushed and wanned and shook;
'The lily-like Melissa drooped her brows;
"Forbear," the Princess cried; "Forbear, Sir," I;
And heated through and through with wrath and love,
I smote him on the breast; he started up;
There rose a shriek as of a city sacked;
Melissa clamored, "Flee the death!" "To horse!"
Said Ida; "home! to horse!" and fled, as flies
A troop of snowy doves athwart the dusk,
When some one batters at the dovecote-doors,
Disorderly the women. Alone I stood

With Florian, cursing Cyril, vext at heart,
In the pavilion : there like parting hopes
I heard them passing from me : hoof by hoof,
And every hoof a knell to my desires,
Clanged on the bridge ; and then another shriek,
" The Head, the Head, the Princess, oh the Head ! "
For blind with rage she missed the plank, and rolled
In the river. Out I sprang from glow to gloom :
There whirled her white robe like a blossomed branch
Rapt to the horrible fall : a glance I gave,
No more ; but woman-vested as I was,
Plunged ; and the flood drew ; yet I caught her ; then
Oaring one arm, and bearing in my left
The weight of all the hopes of half the world,
Strove to buffet to land in vain. A tree
Was half-disrooted from his place, and stooped
To drench his dark locks in the gurgling wave
Mid-channel. Right on this we drove and caught,
And grasping down the boughs I gained the shore.

There stood her maidens glimmeringly grouped
In the hollow bank. One reaching forward drew
My burthen from mine arms ; they cried " She lives ! "
They bore her back into the tent ; but I,
So much a kind of shame within me wrought,

Not yet endured to meet her opening eyes,
Nor found my friends ; but pushed alone on foot
(For since her horse was lost I left her mine)
Across the woods, and less from Indian craft
Than beelike instinct hiveward, found at length
The garden portals. Two great statues, Art
And Science, Caryatids, lifted up
A weight of emblem, and betwixt were valves
Of open-work in which the hunter rued
His rash intrusion, manlike, but his brows
Had sprouted, and the branches thereupon
Spread out at top, and grimly spiked the gates.

A little space was left between the horns,
Through which I clambered o'er at top with pain,
Dropt on the sward, and up the linden walks,
And, tost on thoughts that changed from hue to hue,
Now poring on the glow-worm, now the star,
I paced the terrace, till the bear had wheeled
Through a great arc his seven slow suns.

A step

Of lightest echo, then a loftier form
Than female, moving through the uncertain gloom,
Disturbed me with the doubt "if this were she,"

But it was Florian. "Hist, O hist," he said,
They seek us : out so late is out of rules.
Moreover, 'seize the strangers' is the cry.
How came you here ?" I told him. "I," said he,
"Last of the train, a moral leper, I,
To whom none spake, half-sick at heart, returned.
Arriving all confused among the rest,
With hooded brows I crept into the hall,
And, couched behind a Judith, underneath
The head of Holofernes peeped and saw.
Girl after girl was called to trial : each
Disclaimed all knowledge of us : last of all,
Melissa : trust me, Sir, I pitied her.
She, questioned if she knew us men, at first
Was silent ; closer prest, denied it not :
And then, demanded if her mother knew,
Or Psyche, she affirmed not, or denied :
From whence the Royal mind ; familiar with her
Easily gathered either guilt. She sent
For Psyche, but she was not there ; she called
For Psyche's child to cast it from the doors ;
She sent for Blanche to accuse her face to face ;
And I slipt out : but whither will you now ?
And where are Psyche, Cyril ? both are fled.
What, if together ? that were not so well.

Would rather we had never come ! I dread
His wildness, and the chances of the dark."

"And yet," I said, "you wrong him more than I
That struck him : this is proper to the clown,
Though smocked, or furred and purpled, still the clown,
To harm the thing that trusts him, and to shame
That which he says he loves : for Cyril, howe'er
He deal in frolic, as to-night — the song
Might have been worse and sinned in grosser lips
Beyond all pardon — as it is, I hold
These flashes on the surface are not he.
He has a solid base of temperament :
But as the water-lily starts and slides,
Upon the level in little puffs of wind,
Though anchored to the bottom, such is he."

Scarce had I ceased, when from a tamarisk near
Two Proctors leapt upon us, crying, "Names."
He, standing still, was clutched ; but I began
To thrid the musky-circled mazes, wind
And double in and out the boles, and race
By all the fountains : fleet I was of foot :
Before me showered the rose in flakes ; behind
I heard the puffed pursuer ; at mine ear

Bubbled the nightingale and heeded not,
And secret laughter tickled all my soul.
At last I hooked my ankle in a vine,
That claspt the feet of a Mnemosyne,
And falling on my face was caught and known.

They haled us to the Princess, where she sat
High in the hall: above her drooped a lamp,
And made the single jewel on her brow
Burn like the mystic fire on a mast-head,
Prophet of storm: a handmaid on each side
Bowed toward her, combing out her long black hair
Damp from the river; and close behind her stood
Eight daughters of the plough, stronger than men,
Huge women, blowzed with health, and wind, and rain,
And labor. Each was like a Druid rock;
Or like a spire of land that stands apart
Cleft from the main, and wailed about with mews.

Then, as we came, the crowd dividing clove
An advent to the throne: and therebeside,
Half-naked as if caught at once from bed,
And tumbled on the purple footcloth, lay
The lily-shining child; and on the left,
Bowed on her palms and folded up from wrong,

Her round white shoulder shaken with her sobs,
Melissa knelt; but Lady Blanche, erect,
Stood up and spake, an affluent orator :

“ It was not thus, oh Princess, in old days :
You prized my counsel, lived upon my lips :
I led you then to all the Castalies ;
I fed you with the milk of every Muse ;
I loved you like this kneeler, and you me,
Your second mother : those were gracious times.
Then came your new friend : you began to change —
I saw it and grieved — to slacken and to cool ;
Till taken with her seeming openness
You turned your warmer currents all to her,
To me you froze : this was my meed for all.
Yet I bore up in part from ancient love,
And partly that I hoped to win you back,
And partly conscious of my own deserts,
And partly that you were my civil head,
And chiefly you were born for something great
In which I might your fellow-worker be,
When time should serve ; and thus a noble scheme
Grew up from seed we two long since had sown :
In us true growth, in her a Jonah's gourd,
Up in one night and due to sudden sun :

We took this palace ; but even from the first
You stood in your own light and darkened mine.
What student came but that you planed her path
To Lady Psyche, younger, not so wise,
A foreigner, and I your countrywoman,
I your old friend and tried, she new in all ?
But still her lists were swelled and mine were lean ;
Yet I bore up, in hope she would be known :
Then came these wolves : *they* knew her : *they* endured,
Long-closeted with her the yesternorn,
To tell her what they were, and she to hear :
And me none told : not less to an eye like mine,
A lidless watcher of the public weal,
Last night, their mask was patent, and my foot
Was to you : but I thought again : I feared
To meet a cold ' We thank you, we shall hear of it
From Lady Psyche : ' you had gone to her,
She told, perforce ; and winning easy grace,
No doubt for slight delay, remained among us
In our young nursery still unknown, the stem
Less grain than touchwood, while my honest heat
Were all miscounted as malignant haste
To push my rival out of place and power.
But public use required she should be known ;
And since my oath was ta'en for public use,

I broke the letter of it to keep the sense.
I spoke not then at first, but watched them well,
Saw that they kept apart, no mischief done ;
And yet this day (though you should hate me for it)
I came to tell you ; found that you had gone,
Ridden to the hills, she likewise : now, I thought,
That surely she will speak ; if not, then I.
Did she ? these monsters blazoned what they were,
According to the coarseness of their kind,
For thus I hear ; and known at last (my work)
And full of cowardice and guilty shame,
(I grant in her some sense of shame,) she flies ;
And I remain on whom to wreak your rage,
I, that have lent my life to build up yours,
I, that have wasted here health, wealth and time
And talents, I — you know it — I will not boast :
Dismiss me, and I prophesy your plan,
Divorced from my experience, will be chaff
For every gust of chance, and men will say
We did not know the real light, but chased
The wisp that flickers where no foot can tread."

She ceased : the Princess answered coldly, " Good
Your oath is broken : we dismiss you : go.
For this lost lamb (she pointed to the child)
Our mind is changed : we take it to ourselves."

Thereat the Lady stretched a vulture throat,
And shot from crooked lips a haggard smile.
"The plan was mine. I built the nest," she said,
"To hatch the cuckoo. Rise!" and stooped to updrag
Melissa: she, half on her mother propt,
Half-drooping from her, turned her face, and cast
A liquid look on Ida, full of prayer,
Which melted Florian's fancy as she hung,
A Niobean daughter, one arm out,
Appealing to the bolts of Heaven; and while
We gazed upon her came a little stir
About the doors, and on a sudden rushed
Among us, out of breath, as one pursued,
A woman-post in flying raiment. Fear
Stared in her eyes, and chalked her face, and winged
Her transit to the throne, whereby she fell
Delivering sealed despatches, which the Head
Took half-amazed, and in her lion's mood
Tore open, silent we with blind surmise
Regarding, while she read, till over brow
And cheek and bosom brake the wrathful bloom
As of some fire against a stormy cloud,
When the wild peasant rights himself, the rick
Flames, and his anger reddens in the heavens,
For anger most it seemed, while now her breast,

Beaten with some great passion at her heart,
Palpitated, her hand shook, and we heard
In the dead hush the papers that she held
Rustle : at once the lost lamb at her feet
Sent out a bitter bleating for its dam ;
The plaintive cry jarred on her ire ; she crushed
The scrolls together, made a sudden turn
As if to speak, but, utterance failing her,
She whirled them on to me, as who should say
“ Read,” and I read — two letters — one her sire’s.

“ Fair daughter, when we sent the Prince your way
We knew not your ungracious laws, which learnt,
We, conscious of what temper you are built,
Came all in haste to hinder wrong, but fell
Into his father’s hands, who has this night,
You lying close upon his territory,
Slipt round and in the dark invested you,
And here he keeps me hostage for his son.”

The second was my father’s, running thus :
“ You have our son : touch not a hair of his head :
Render him up unscathed : give him your hand :
Cleave to your contract : though indeed we hear
You hold the woman is the better man ;

A rampant heresy, such as if it spread
 Would make all women kick against their Lords
 Through all the world, and which might well deserve
 That we this night should pluck your palace down ;
 And we will do it, unless you send us back
 Our son, on the instant, whole."

So far I read ;
 And then stood up and spoke impetuously :

" O not to pry and peer on your reserve,
 But led by golden wishes and a hope
 The child of regal compact, did I break
 Your precinct ; not a scorner of your sex
 But venerator, zealous it should be
 All that it might be : hear me, for I bear,
 Though man, yet human, whatso'er your wrongs,
 From the flaxen curl to the gray lock a life
 Less mine than yours : my nurse would tell me of you .
 I babbled for you, as babies for the moon,
 Vague brightness ; when a boy, you stooped to me
 From all high places, lived in all fair lights,
 Came in long breezes rapt from inmost south,
 And blown to inmost north ; at eve and dawn
 With Ida, Ida, Ida, rang the woods ;
 The leader wild-swan in among the stars

Would clang it, and lapt in wreaths of glowworm light
The mellow breaker murmured Ida. Now,
Because I would have reached you, you had been
Sphered up with Cassiopëia, or the enthroned
Persephone in Hades, now at length,
Those winters of abeyance all worn out,
A man I came to see you : but, indeed,
Not in this frequency can I lend full tongue,
O noble Ida, to those thoughts that wait
On you, their centre : let me say but this,
That many a famous man and woman, town
And landskip, have I heard of, after seen
The dwarfs of presage ; though when known, there grew
Another kind of beauty in detail
Made them worth knowing ; but in you I found
My boyish dream involved and dazzled down
And mastered, while that after-beauty makes
Such head from act to act, from hour to hour,
Within me, that except you slay me here,
According to your bitter statute-book,
I cannot cease to follow you as they say
The seal does music ; who desire you more
Than growing boys their manhood ; dying lips,
With many thousand matters left to do,
The breath of life ; oh, more than poor men wealth,

Than sick men health — yours, yours, not mine — but half
Without you, with you, whole ; and of those halves
You worthiest ; and howe'er you block and bar
Your heart with system out from mine, I hold
That it becomes no man to nurse despair,
But in the teeth of clenched antagonisms
To follow up the worthiest till he die :
Yet that I came not all unauthorized,
Behold your father's letter."

On one knee

Kneeling, I gave it, which she caught, and dashed
Unopened at her feet : a tide of fierce
Invective seemed to wait behind her lips,
As waits a river level with the dam
Ready to burst and flood the world with foam :
And so she would have spoken, but there rose
A hubbub in the court of half the maids
Gathered together ; from the illumined hall
Long lanes of splendor slanted o'er a press
Of snowy shoulders, thick as herded ewes,
And rainbow robes, and gems and gemlike eyes,
And gold and golden heads ; they to and fro
Fluctuated, as flowers in storm, some red, some pale,
All open-mouthed, all gazing to the light,
Some crying there was an army in the land,

And some that men were in the very walls,
And some they cared not ; till a clamor grew
As of a new-world Babel, woman-built,
And worse-confounded : high above them stood
The placid marble Muses, looking peace.

Not peace, she looked, the Head : but rising up
Robed in the long night of her deep hair, so
To the open window moved, remaining there
Fixt like a beacon-tower above the waves
Of tempest, when the crimson-rolling eye
Glares ruin, and the wild birds on the light
Dash themselves dead. She stretched her arms and
called
Across the tumult, and the tumult fell :

“ What fear ye, brawlers ? am not I your Head ?
On me, me, me, the storm first breaks : *I* dare
All these male thunderbolts : what is it ye fear ?
Peace ! there are those to avenge us, and they come :
If not, — myself were like enough, oh girls,
To unfurl the maiden banner of our rights,
And clad in iron burst the ranks of war,
Or, falling, protomartyr of our cause,
Die : yet I blame ye not so much for fear ;

Six thousand years of fear have made ye that
From which I would redeem ye : but for those
That stir this hubbub — you and you — I know
Your faces there in the crowd — to-morrow morn
We hold a great convention : then shall they
That love their voices more than duty, learn
With whom they deal, dismissed in shame to live
No wiser than their mothers, household stuff,
Live chattels, mincers of each other's fame,
Full of weak poison, turnspits for the clown,
The drunkard's football, laughing-stocks of Time,
Whose brains are in their hands and in their heels,
But fit to flaunt, to dress, to dance, to thrum,
To tramp, to scream, to burnish, and to scour,
Forever slaves at home and fools abroad ! ”

She, ending, waved her hands : thereat the crowd
Muttering, dissolved : then with a smile, that looked
A stroke of cruel sunshine on the cliff
When all the glens are drowned in azure gloom
Of thunder-shower, she floated to us and said :

“ You have done well and like a gentleman,
And like a prince : you have our thanks for all :
And you look well too in your woman's dress :

Well have you done, and like a gentleman.
 You saved our life : we owe you bitter thanks :
 Better have died and spilt our bones in the flood —
 Then men had said — but now — What hinders me
 To take such bloody vengeance on you both ? —
 Yet since our father — Wasps in our good hive,
 You would-be quenchers of the light to be,
 Barbarians, grosser than your native bears —
 O would I had his sceptre for one hour !
 You that have dared to break our bound, and gulled
 Our servants, wronged and lied and thwarted us —
I wed with thee ! I bound by precontract
 Your bride, your bondslave ! not though all the gold
 That veins the world were packed to make your crown,
 And every spoken tongue should lord you ! Sir,
 Your falsehood and yourself are hateful to us :
 I trample on your offers and on you :
 Begone ! we will not look upon you more.
 Here, push them out at gates ! ”

In wrath she spake.

Then those eight mighty daughters of the plough
 Bent their broad faces toward us and addressed
 Their motion : twice I sought to plead my cause,
 But on my shoulder hung their heavy hands,
 The weight of destiny : so from her face

They pushed us, down the steps, and through the court,
And with grim laughter thrust us out at gates.

We crossed the street, and gained a petty mound
Beyond it, whence we saw the lights and heard
The voices murmuring. While I listened came
On a sudden the weird seizure and the doubt :
I seemed to move among a world of ghosts ;
The Princess with her monstrous woman-guard,
The jest and earnest working side by side,
The cataract, and the tumult, and the kings
Were shadows ; and the long fantastic night
With all its doings had and had not been,
And all things were and were not.

This went by

As strangely as it came, and on my spirits
Settled a gentle cloud of melancholy ;
Not long ; I shook it off ; for spite of doubts
And sudden ghostly shadowings I was one
To whom the touch of all mischance but came
As night to him that sitting on a hill
Sees the midsummer, midnight, Norway sun,
Set into sunrise : then we moved away.

Thy voice is heard through rolling drums
That beat to battle where he stands ;
Thy face across his fancy comes,
And gives the battle to his hands :
A moment, while the trumpets blow,
He sees his brood about thy knee ;
The next, like fire he meets the foe,
And strikes him dead for thine and thee.

So Lilia sang : we thought her half-possessed,
She struck such warbling fury through the words ;
And, after, feigning pique at what she called
The raillery, or grotesque, or false sublime —
Like one that wishes at a dance to change
The music — clapt her hands and cried for war,
Or some grand fight to kill and make an end :
And he that next inherited the tale,
Half turning to the broken statue, said,
“ Sir Ralph has got your colors : if I prove
Your knight and fight your battle, what for me ? ”
It chanced her empty glove upon the tomb

Lay by her like a model of her hand.
She took it and she flung it. "Fight," she said,
"And make us all we would be, great and good."
He knightlike in his cap instead of casque,
A cap of Tyrol borrow'd from the hall,
Arranged the favor and assumed the Prince.

V

Now scarce three paces measured from the mound
We stumbled on a stationary voice,
And "Stand, who goes?" "Two from the palace," I.
"The second two: they wait," he said, "pass on;
His Highness wakes:" and one, that clashed in arms
By glimmering lanes and walls of canvas, led
Threading the soldier-city, till we heard
The drowsy folds of our great ensign shake
From blazoned lions o'er the imperial tent
Whispers of war.

Entering, the sudden light
Dazed me half-blind: I stood and seemed to hear,
As in a poplar grove when a light wind wakes
A lisp of the innumerable leaf and dies,
Each hissing in his neighbor's ear; and then
A strangled titter, out of which there brake
On all sides, clamoring etiquette to death,
Unmeasured mirth; while now the two old kings
Began to wag their baldness up and down,

The fresh young captains flashed their glittering teeth ;
 The huge bush-bearded Barons heaved and blew,
 And slain with laughter rolled the gilded Squire.

At length my Sire, his rough cheek wet with tears,
 Panted from weary sides, " King, you are free !
 We did but keep you surety for our son,
 If this be he, — or a draggled mawkin, thou,
 That tends her bristled grunTERS in the sludge : "
 For I was drenched with ooze, and torn with briers,
 More crumpled than a poppy from the sheath,
 And all one rag, disprincED from head to heel :
 Then some one sent beneath his vaulted palm
 A whispered jest to some one near him, " Look,
 He has been among his shadows." " Satan take
 The old women and their shadows ! (thus the king
 Roared) make yourself a man to fight with men.
 Go : Cyril told us all."

As boys that slink
 From ferule and the trespass-chiding eye,
 Away we stole, and transient in a trice
 From what was left of faded woman-slough
 To sheathing splendors and the golden scale
 Of harness, issued in the sun that now
 Leapt from the dewy shoulders of the Earth,

And hit the northern hills. Here Cyril met us,
A little shy at first, but by and by
We twain, with mutual pardon asked and given
For stroke and song, resoldered peace, whereon
Followed his tale. Amazed he fled away
Through the dark land, and later in the night
Had come on Psyche weeping : " then we fell
Into your father's hand, and there she lies,
But will not speak, nor stir."

He showed a tent

A stone-shot off : we entered in, and there
Among piled arms and rough accoutrements,
Pitiful sight, wrapt in a soldier's cloak,
Like some sweet sculpture draped from head to foot,
And pushed by rude hands from its pedestal,
All her fair length upon the ground she lay :
And at her head a follower of the camp,
A charred and wrinkled piece of womanhood,
Sat watching like a watcher by the dead.

Then Florian knelt, and " Come," he whispered to her
" Lift up your head, sweet sister : lie not thus.
What have you done but right ? you could not slay
Me, nor your prince : look up : be comforted :
Sweet is it to have done the thing one ought.

When fallen in darker ways." And likewise I:
"Be comforted: have I not lost her too,
In whose least act abides the nameless charm
That none has else for me." She heard, she moved,
She moaned, a folded voice; and up she sat,
And raised the cloak from brows as pale and smooth
As those that mourn half-shrouded over death
In deathless marble, "Her," she said, "my friend —
Parted from her — betrayed her cause and mine —
Where shall I breathe? why kept ye not your faith?
O base and bad! what comfort? none for me!"
To whom remorseful Cyril, "Yet I pray
Take comfort: live, dear lady, for your child,"
At which she lifted up her voice and cried:

"Ah me, my babe, my blossom, ah my child,
My one sweet child, whom I shall see no more!
For now will cruel Ida keep her back;
And either she will die from want of care,
Or sicken with ill usage, when they say
The child is hers — for every little fault,
The child is hers; and they will beat my girl,
Remembering her mother: oh my flower!
Or they will take her, they will make her hard,
And she will pass me by in after-life
With some cold reverence worse than were she dead.

Ill mother that I was to leave her there,
To lag behind, scared by the cry they made,
The horror of the shame among them all :
But I will go and sit beside the doors,
And make a wild petition night and day,
Until they hate to hear me like a wind
Wailing forever, till they open to me,
And lay my little blossom at my feet,
My babe, my sweet Aglaïa, my one child :
And I will take her up and go my way,
And satisfy my soul with kissing her :
Ah ! what might that man not deserve of me,
Who gave me back my child ?” “ Be comforted,”
Said Cyril, “ you shall have it :” but again
She veiled her brows, and prone she sank, and so
Like tender things that being caught feign death,
Spoke not, nor stirred.

By this a murmur ran
Through all the camp, and inward raced the scouts
With rumor of Prince Arac hard at hand.
We left her by the woman, and without
Found the gray kings at parle : and “ Look you,” cried
My father, “ that our compact be fulfilled :
You have spoilt this child ; she laughs at you and man :
She wrongs herself, her sex, and me, and him.

But red-faced war has rods of steel and fire ;
She yields, or war."

Then Gama turned to me :

"We fear, indeed, you spent a stormy time
With our strange girl : and yet they say that still
You love her. Give us, then, your mind at large :
How say you, war or not ?"

"Not war, if possible,

O King," I said, "lest from the abuse of war,
The desecrated shrine, the trampled year,
The smouldering homestead, and the household flower
Torn from the lintel — all the common wrong —
A smoke go up through which I loom to her
Three times a monster : now she lightens scorn
At him that mars her plan, but then would hate
(And every voice she talked with ratify it,
And every face she looked on justify it)
The general foe. More soluble is this knot
By gentleness than war. I want her love.
What were I nigher this, although we dashed
Your cities into shards with catapults ;
She would not love ; — or brought her chained, a slave,
The lifting of whose eyelash is my lord,
Not ever would she love ; but brooding turn

The book of scorn, till all my little chance
 Were caught within the record of her wrongs,
 And crushed to death ; and, rather, Sire, than this,
 I would the old God of war himself were dead,
 Forgotten, rusting on his iron hills,
 Rotting on some wild shore with ribs of wreck,
 Or like an old-world mammoth bulked in ice,
 Not to be molten out."

And roughly spake

My father, " Tut, you know them not, the girls.
 Boy, when I hear you prate I almost think
 That idiot legend credible. Look you, Sir !
 Man is the hunter ; woman is his game ;
 The sleek and shining creatures of the chase,
 We hunt them for the beauty of their skins ;
 They love us for it, and we ride them down.
 Wheedling and siding with them ! Out ! for shame !
 Boy, there 's no rose that 's half so dear to them
 As he that does the thing they dare not do,
 Breathing and sounding beauteous battle, comes
 With the air of the trumpet round him, and leaps in
 Among the women, snares them by the score,
 Flattered and flustered, wins, though dashed with death
 He reddens what he kisses ; thus I won

Your mother, a good mother, a good wife,
 Worth winning; but this firebrand — gentleness
 To such as her! if Cyril spake her true,
 To catch a dragon in a cherry net,
 To trip a tigress with a gossamer,
 Were wisdom to it."

"Yea, but Sire," I cried,
 "Wild natures need wise curbs. The soldier? No:
 What dares not Ida do that she should prize
 The soldier? I beheld her, when she rose
 The yesternight, and storming in extremes
 Stood for her cause, and flung defiance down
 Gagelike to man and had not shunned the death,
 No, not the soldier's: yet I hold her, King,
 True woman: but you clash them all in one,
 That have as many differences as we.
 The violet varies from the lily as far
 As oak from elm: one loves the soldier, one
 The silken priest of peace, one this, one that,
 And some unworthily; their sinless faith,
 A maiden moon that sparkles on a sty,
 Glorifying clown and satyr; whence they need
 More breadth of culture: is not Ida right?
 They worth it? truer to the law within?
 Severer in the logic of a life?"

Twice as magnetic to sweet influences
Of Earth and Heaven? and she of whom you speak,
My mother, looks as whole as some serene
Creation minted in the golden moods
Of sovereign artists; not a thought, a touch,
But pure as lines of green that streak the white
Of the first snowdrop's inner leaves; I say
Not like the piebald miscellany, man,
Bursts of great heart and slips in sensual mire,
But whole and one: and take them all-in-all,
Were we ourselves but half as good, as kind,
As truthful, much that Ida claims as right
Had ne'er been mooted, but as frankly theirs
As dues of Nature. To our point: not war:
Lest I lose all."

"Nay, nay, you spake but sense,"
Said Gama. "We remember love ourselves
In our sweet youth: we did not rate him then
This red-hot iron to be shaped with blows.
You talk almost like Ida: she can talk;
And there is something in it as you say:
But you talk kindlier: we esteem you for it.—
He seems a gracious and a gallant prince,
I would he had our daughter: for the rest,

Our own detention, why the causes weighed,
Fatherly fears — you used us courteously —
We would do much to gratify your Prince —
We pardon it; and for your ingress here
Upon the skirt and fringe of our fair land,
You did but come as goblins in the night,
Nor in the furrow broke the ploughman's head,
Nor burnt the grange, nor bussed the milking-maid,
Nor robbed the farmer of his bowl of cream :
But let your Prince (our royal word upon it,
He comes back safe) ride with us to our lines,
And speak with Arac : Arac's word is thrice
As ours with Ida : something may be done —
I know not what — and ours shall see us friends.
You, likewise, our late guests, if so you will,
Follow us : who knows ? we four may build some plan
Foursquare to opposition."

Here he reached
White hands of farewell to my sire, who growled
An answer which, half-muffled in his beard,
Let so much out as gave us leave to go.

Then rode we with the old king across the lawns
Beneath huge trees, a thousand rings of Spring

In every bole, a song on every spray
Of birds that piped their Valentines, and woke
Desire in me to infuse my tale of love
In the old king's ears, who promised help, and oozed
All o'er with honeyed answer as we rode ;
And blossom-fragrant slipt the heavy dews,
Gathered by night and peace, with each light air
On our mailed heads : but other thoughts than Peace
Burnt in us, when we saw the embattled squares,
And squadrons of the Prince, trampling the flowers
With clamor : for among them rose a cry
As if to greet the king ; they made a halt ;
The horses yelled ; they clashed their arms ; the drum
Beat ; merrily-blowing shrilled the martial fife ;
And in the blast and bray of the long horn
And serpent-throated bugle, undulated
The banner : anon to meet us lightly pranced
Three captains out ; nor ever had I seen
Such thews of men : the midmost and the highest
Was Arac : all about his motion clung
The shadow of his sister, as the beam
Of the East, that played upon them, made them glance
Like those three stars of the airy Giant's zone,
That glitter burnished by the frosty dark ;
And as the fiery Sirius alters hue,

And bickers into red and emerald, shone
Their morions, washed with morning, as they came.

And I that prated peace, when first I heard
War-music, felt the blind wild beast of force
Whose home is in the sinews of a man
Stir in me as to strike ; then took the king
His three broad sons ; with now a wandering hand
And now a pointed finger, told them all :
A common light of smiles at our disguise
Broke from their lips, and, ere the windy jest
Had labored down within his ample lungs,
The genial giant, Arac, rolled himself
Thrice in the saddle, then burst out in words.

“Our land invaded, 'sdeath ! and he himself
Your captive, yet my father wills not war :
And, 'sdeath ! myself, what care I, war or no ?
But then this question of your troth remains ;
And there 's a downright honest meaning in her ;
She flies too high, she flies too high ! and yet
She asked but space and fair play for her scheme ;
She prest and prest it on me — I myself
What know I of these things ? but, life and soul
I thought her half right talking of her wrongs ;

I say she flies too high, 'sdeath ! what of that ?
I take her for the flower of womankind,
And so I often told her, right or wrong,
And, Prince, she can be sweet to those she loves,
And, right or wrong, I care not : this is all,
I stand upon her side : she made me swear it —
'Sdeath ! — and with solemn rites by candle-light —
Swear by St. something — I forget her name —
Her that talked down the fifty wisest men ;
She was a princess too ; and so I swore.
Come, this is all ; she will not : waive your claim :
If not, the foughten field, what else, at once
Decides it, 'sdeath ! against my father's will."

I lagged in answer, loth to render up
My precontract, and loth by brainless war
To cleave the rift of difference deeper yet ;
Till one of those two brothers, half aside
And fingering at the hair about his lip,
To prick us on to combat, " Like to like !
The woman's garment hid the woman's heart."
A taunt that clenched his purpose like a blow !
For fiery-short was Cyril's counter-scoff,
And sharp I answered, touched upon the point

Where idle boys are cowards to their shame,
"Decide it here: why not? we are three to three."

Then spake the third, "But three to three! no more?
No more, and in our noble sister's cause?
More, more, for honor: every captain waits
Hungry for honor, angry for his king.
More, more, some fifty on a side, that each
May breathe himself, and quick! by overthrow
Of these or those, the question settled, die."

"Yea," answered I, "for this wild wreath of air,
This flake of rainbow flying on the highest
Foam of men's deeds — this honor, if ye will.
It needs must be for honor if at all:
Since, what decision? if we fail, we fail,
And if we win, we fail: she would not keep
Her compact." "'Sdeath! but we will send to her,"
Said Arac; "worthy reasons why she should
Bide by this issue: let our missive through,
And you shall have her answer by the word."

"Boys!" shrieked the old king, but vainlier than a hen
To her false daughters in the pool; for none
Regarded; neither seemed there more to say:

Back rode we to my father's camp, and found
He thrice had sent a herald to the gates,
To learn if Ida yet would cede our claim,
Or by denial flush her babbling wells
With her own people's life : three times he went :
The first, he blew and blew, but none appeared.
He battered at the doors ; none came : the next,
An awful voice within had warned him thence :
The third, and those eight daughters of the plough
Came sallying through the gates, and caught his hair,
And so belabored him on rib and cheek
They made him wild : not less one glance he caught
Through open doors of Ida stationed there
Unshaken, clinging to her purpose, firm
Though compassed by two armies and the noise
Of arms ; and standing like a stately pine
Set in a cataract on an island-crag,
When storm is on the heights, and right and left
Sucked from the dark heart of the long hills roll
The torrents, dashed to the vale : and yet her will
Bred will in me to overcome it or fall.

But when I told the king that I was pledged
To fight in tourney for my bride, he clashed
His iron palms together with a cry ;

Himself would tilt it out among the lads :
But overborne by all his bearded lords
With reasons drawn from age and state, perforce
He yielded, wroth and red, with fierce demur :
And many a bold knight started up in heat,
And sware to combat for my claim till death.

All on this side the palace ran the field
Flat to the garden-wall : and likewise here,
Above the garden's glowing blossom-belts,
A columned entry shone and marble stairs,
And great bronze valves, embossed with Tomyris
And what she did to Cyrus after fight,
But now fast barred : so here upon the flat
All that long morn the lists were hammered up,
And all that morn the heralds to and fro,
With message and defiance, went and came ;
Last, Ida's answer, in a royal hand,
But shaken here and there, and rolling words
Oration-like. I kissed it and I read :

“ O brother, you have known the pangs we felt,
What heats of indignation, when we heard
Of those that iron-cramped their women's feet ;
Of lands in which at the altar the poor bride

Gives her harsh groom for bridal-gift a scourge ;
Of living hearts that crack within the fire
Where smoulder their dead despots ; and of those, —
Mothers, — that, all prophetic pity, fling
Their pretty maids in the running flood, and swoops
The vulture, beak and talon, at the heart
Made for all noble motion : and I saw
That equal baseness lived in sleeker times
With smoother men : the old leaven leavened all :
Millions of throats would bawl for civil rights,
No woman named : therefore I set my face
Against all men and lived but for mine own.
Far off from men I built a fold for them :
I stored it full of rich memorial :
I fenced it round with gallant institutes,
And biting laws to scare the beasts of prey, .
And prospered ; till a rout of saucy boys
Brake on us at our books, and marred our peace,
Masked like our maids, blustering I know not what
Of insolence and love, some pretext held
Of baby troth, invalid, since my will
Sealed not the bond — the striplings ! — for their sport !
I have tamed my leopards : shall I not tame these ?
Or you ? or I ? for since you think me touched
In honor — what, I would not aught of false —

Is not our cause pure? and whereas I know
 Your prowess, Arac, and what mother's blood
 You draw from, fight; you failing, I abide
 What end soever, fail you will not. Still
 Take not his life: he risked it for my own;
 His mother lives: yet whatsoe'er you do,
 Fight and fight well; strike, and strike home. O, dear
 Brothers, the woman's Angel guards you, you
 The sole men to be mingled with our cause,
 The sole men we shall prize in the after time
 Your very armor hallowed, and your statues
 Reared, sung to, when, this gad-fly brushed aside,
 We plant a solid foot into the Time,
 And mould a generation strong to move
 With claim on claim from right to right, till she
 Whose name is yoked with children's, know herself;
 And knowledge in our own land make her free,
 And, ever following those two crowned twins,
 Commerce and conquest, shower the fiery grain
 Of Freedom broadcast over all that orbs
 Between the Northern and the Southern morn."

Then came a postscript dashed across the rest.
 "See that there be no traitors in your camp:
 We seem a nest of traitors — none to trust

Since our arms failed — this Egypt-plague of men '
 Almost our maids were better at their homes,
 Than thus man-girdled here : Indeed I think
 Our chiefest comfort is the little child
 Of one unworthy mother ; which she left :
 She shall not have it back : the child shall grow
 To prize the authentic mother of her mind.
 I took it for an hour in mine own bed,
 This morning : there the tender orphan hands
 Felt at my heart, and seemed to charm from thence
 The wrath I nursed against the world : farewell."

I ceased ; he said : " Stubborn, but she may sit
 Upon a king's right hand in thunder-storms
 And breed up warriors ! See now, though yourself
 Be dazzled by the wildfire Love to sloughs
 That swallow common sense, the spindling king,
 This Gama swamped in lazy tolerance.
 When the man wants weight the woman takes it up,
 And topples down the scales ; but this is fixt
 As are the roots of earth and base of all.
 Man for the field, and woman for the hearth :
 Man for the sword, and for the needle she :
 Man with the head, and woman with the heart :
 Man to command and woman to obey :

All else confusion. Look you : the gray mare
Is ill to live with, when her whinny shrills
From tile to scullery, and her small goodman
Shrinks in his arm-chair, while the fires of Hell
Mix with his hearth : but you — she's yet a colt —
Take, break her : strongly groomed and straitly curbed,
She might not rank with those detestable
That let the bantling scald at home, and brawl
Their rights or wrongs like pot-herbs in the street.
They say she's comely ; there's the fairer chance :
I like her none the less for rating at her !
Besides, the woman wed is not as we,
But suffers change of frame. A lusty brace
Of twins may weed her of her folly. Boy,
The bearing and the training of a child
Is woman's wisdom."

Thus the hard old king :

I took my leave, for it was nearly noon :
I pored upon her letter which I held,
And on the little clause, "take not his life :"
I mused on that wild morning in the woods,
And on the "Follow, follow, thou shalt win :"
I thought on all the wrathful king had said,
And how the strange betrothment was to end :

Then I remembered that burnt sorcerer's curse,
That one should fight with shadows, and should fall ;
And like a flash the weird affection came :
King, camp and college turned to hollow shows ;
I seemed to move in old memorial tilts,
And doing battle with forgotten ghosts,
To dream myself the shadow of a dream ;
And ere I woke it was the point of noon,
The lists were ready. Empanoplied and plumed
We entered in, and waited, fifty there
Opposed to fifty, till the trumpet blared
At the barrier, like a wild horn in a land
Of echoes, and a moment, and once more
The trumpet, and again : at which the storm
Of galloping hoofs bare on the ridge of spears,
And riders front to front, until they closed
In conflict with the crash of shivering points,
And thunder. Yet it seemed a dream ; I dreamed
Of fighting. On his haunches rose the steed,
And into fiery splinters leapt the lance,
And out of stricken helmets sprang the fire.
A noble dream ! what was it else I saw ?
Part sat like rocks : part reeled but kept their seats :
Part rolled on the earth and rose again and drew :
Part stumbled, mixt with floundering horses. Down
From those two bulks at Arac's side, and down

From Arac's arm, as from a giant's flail,
The large blows rained, as here and everywhere
He rode the mellay, lord of the ringing lists,
And all the plain, — brand, mace, and shaft, and shield,
Shocked, like an iron-clanging anvil banged
With hammers ; till I thought, can this be he
From Gama's dwarfish loins ? if this be so,
The mother makes us most — and in my dream
I glanced aside, and saw the palace-front
Alive with fluttering scarfs and ladies' eyes,
And highest among the statues, statuelike,
Between a cymbaled Miriam and a Jael,
With Psyche's babe, was Ida watching us,
A single band of gold about her hair,
Like a Saint's glory up in heaven : but she
No saint — inexorable — no tenderness —
Too hard, too cruel : yet she sees me fight,
Yea, let her see me fall ! with that I drave
Among the thickest, and bore down a Prince,
And Cyril one. Yea, let me make my dream
All that I would. But that large-moulded man,
His visage all agrin as at a wake,
Made at me through the press, and staggering back
With stroke on stroke the horse and horseman, came
As comes a pillar of electric cloud,
Flaying the roofs and sucking up the drains.

And shadowing down the champaign till it strikes
On a wood, and takes, and breaks, and cracks, and splits,
And twists the grain with such a roar that Earth
Reels and the herdsmen cry, for everything
Gave way before him : only Florian, he
That loved me closer than his own right eye,
Thrust in between ; but Arac rode him down :
And Cyril seeing it, pushed against the Prince,
With Psyche's color round his helmet, tough,
Strong, supple, sinew-corded, apt at arms ;
But tougher, heavier, stronger, he that smote
And threw him : last I spurred ; I felt my veins
Stretch with fierce heat ; a moment hand to hand,
And sword to sword, and horse to horse, we hung,
Till I struck out and shouted ; the blade glanced ;
I did but shear a feather, and dream and truth
Flowed from me ; darkness closed me ; and I fell.

Home they brought her warrior dead :
She nor swooned, nor uttered cry :
All her maidens, watching, said,
"She must weep or she will die."

Then they praised him, soft and low,
Called him worthy to be loved,
Truest friend and noblest foe ;
Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,
Lightly to the warrior stept,
Took the face-cloth from the face ;
Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,
Set his child upon her knee —
Like summer tempest came her tears —
"Sweet my child, I live for thee."

VI

My dream had never died or lived again.
As in some mystic middle state I lay ;
Seeing I saw not, hearing not I heard ;
Though, if I saw not, yet they told me all
So often, that I speak as having seen.

For so it seemed, or so they said to me,
That all things grew more tragic and more strange ;
That when our side was vanquished, and my cause
Forever lost, there went up a great cry,
The Prince is slain. My father heard and ran
In on the lists, and there unlaced my casque
And grovelled on my body, and after him
Came Psyche, sorrowing for Aglaïa.

But high upon the palace Ida stood
With Psyche's babe in arm : there on the roofs
Like that great dame of Lapidoth she sang :

“ Our enemies have fallen, have fallen : the seed,
The little seed they laughed at in the dark,
Has risen and cleft the soil, and grown a bulk
Of spanless girth, that lays on every side
A thousand arms and rushes to the Sun.

“ Our enemies have fallen, have fallen : they came ;
The leaves were wet with women’s tears : they heard
A noise of songs they would not understand.
They marked it with the red cross to the fall,
And would have strown it, and are fallen themselves.

“ Our enemies have fallen, have fallen : they came,
The woodmen with their axes : lo the tree !
But we will make it fagots for the hearth,
And shape it plank and beam for roof and floor,
And boats and bridges for the use of men.

“ Our enemies have fallen, have fallen : they struck
With their own blows they hurt themselves, nor knew
There dwelt an iron nature in the grain :
The glittering axe was broken in their arms,
Their arms were shattered to the shoulder blade.

“ Our enemies have fallen, but this shall grow
A night of Summer from the heat, a breadth
Of Autumn, dropping fruits of power ; and rolled
With music in the growing breeze of Time,
The tops shall strike from star to star, the fangs
Shall move the stony bases of the world.

“ And now, O maids, behold our sanctuary
Is violate, our laws broken : fear we not
To break them more in their behoof, whose arms
Championed our cause and won it with a day
Blanched in our annals, and perpetual feast,
When dames and heroines of the golden year
Shall strip a hundred hollows bare of Spring,
To rain an April of ovation round
Their statues, borne aloft, the three : but come,
We will be liberal, since our rights are won.
Let them not lie in the tents, with coarse mankind,
Ill nurses ; but descend, and proffer these,
The brethren of our blood and cause, that there
Lie bruised and maimed, the tender ministries
Of female hands and hospitality.”

She spoke, and with the babe yet in her arms,
Descending, burst the great bronze valves, and led

A hundred maids in train across the Park.
Some cowled, and some bare-headed, on they came,
Their feet in flowers, her loveliest : by them went
The enamored air sighing, and on their curls
From the high tree the blossom wavering fell,
And over them the tremulous isles of light
Slided, they moving under shade : but Blanche
At distance followed : so they came : anon
Through open field into the lists they wound
Timorously ; and as the leader of the herd
That holds a stately fretwork to the Sun,
And followed up by a hundred airy does,
Steps with a tender foot, light as on air,
The lovely, lordly creature floated on
To where her wounded brethren lay ; there stayed ;
Knelt on one knee, — the child on one, — and prest
Their hands, and called them dear deliverers,
And happy warriors, and immortal names,
And said, “ You shall not lie in the tents, but here,
And nursed by those for whom you fought, and served
With female hands and hospitality.”

Then, whether moved by this, or was it chance,
She past my way. Up started from my side
The old lion, glaring with his whelpless eye,

Silent ; but when she saw me lying stark,
Dishelmed and mute, and motionlessly pale,
Cold even to her, she sighed ; and when she saw
The haggard father's face and reverend beard
Of grisly twine, all dabbled with the blood
Of his own son, shuddered, a twitch of pain
Tortured her mouth, and o'er her forehead past
A shadow, and her hue changed, and she said :
" He saved my life : my brother slew him for it."
No more : at which the king in bitter scorn
Drew from my neck the painting and the tress,
And held them up : she saw them, and a day
Rose from the distance on her memory,
When the good queen, her mother, shore the tress
With kisses, ere the days of Lady Blanche :
And then once more she looked at my pale face :
Till understanding all the foolish work
Of Fancy, and the bitter close of all,
Her iron will was broken in her mind ;
Her noble heart was molten in her breast ;
She bowed, she set the child on the earth ; she laid
A feeling finger on my brows, and presently
" O Sire," she said, " he lives : he is not dead :
O let me have him with my brethren here
In our own palace : we will tend on him

Like one of these ; if so, by any means,
To lighten this great clog of thanks, that make
Our progress falter to the woman's goal."

She said : but at the happy word, " he lives,"
My father stooped, re-fathered o'er my wounds.
So those two foes above my fallen life,
With brow to brow like night and evening mixt
Their dark and gray, while Psyche ever stole
A little nearer, till the babe, that by us,
Half-lapt in glowing gauze and golden brede,
Lay like a new-fallen meteor on the grass,
Uncared for, spied its mother, and began
A blind and babbling laughter, and to dance
Its body, and reach its fatling innocent arms,
And lazy lingering fingers. She the appeal
Brooked not, but clamoring out " Mine — mine — not
yours,

It is not yours, but mine : give me the child,"
Ceased all on tremble : piteous was the cry :
So stood the unhappy mother open-mouthed,
And turned each face her way : wan was her cheek
With hollow watch, her blooming mantle torn,
Red grief and mother's hunger in her eye,
And down dead-heavy sank her curls, and half

The sacred mother's bosom, panting, burst
The laces toward her babe ; but she nor cared
Nor knew it, clamoring on, till Ida heard,
Looked up, and rising slowly from me, stood
Erect and silent, striking with her glance
The mother, me, the child ; but he that lay
Beside us, Cyril, battered as he was,
Trailed himself up on one knee : then he drew
Her robe to meet his lips, and down she looked
At the armed man sideways, pitying, as it seemed,
Or self-involved ; but when she learnt his face,
Remembering his ill-omened song, arose
Once more through all her height, and o'er him grew
Tall as a figure lengthened on the sand
When the tide ebbs in sunshine, and he said :

“ O fair and strong and terrible ! Lioness
That with your long locks play the Lion's mane !
But Love and Nature, these are two more terrible
And stronger. See, your foot is on our necks,
We vanquished, you the Victor of your will.
What would you more ? give her the child ! remain
Orbed in your isolation : he is dead,
Or all as dead : henceforth we let you be :
Win you the hearts of women ; and beware

Lest, where you seek the common love of these,
 The common hate, with the revolving wheel,
 Should drag you down, and some great Nemesis
 Break from a darkened future, crowned with fire,
 And tread you out forever : but howsoe'er
 Fixed in yourself, never in your own arms
 To hold your own, deny not hers to her,
 Give her the child ! O if, I say, you keep
 One pulse that beats true woman, if you loved
 The breast that fed or arm that dandled you,
 Or own one part of sense not flint to prayer,
 Give her the child ! or if you scorn to lay it,
 Yourself, in hands so lately clasped with yours,
 Or speak to her, your dearest, her one fault
 The tenderness, not yours, that could not kill,
 Give *me* it ; I will give it her."

He said :

At first her eye with slow dilation rolled
 Dry flame, she listening ; after sank and sank,
 And, into mournful twilight mellowing, dwelt
 Full on the child ; she took it : " Pretty bud !
 Lily of the vale ! half-opened bell of the woods !
 Sole comfort of my dark hour, when a world
 Of traitorous friend and broken system made
 No purple in the distance, mystery,

Pledge of a love not to be mine, farewell ;
These men are hard upon us as of old,
We two must part : and yet how fain was I
To dream thy cause embraced in mine, to think
I might be something to thee, when I felt
Thy helpless warmth about my barren breast
In the dead prime : but may thy mother prove
As true to thee as false, false, false to me !
And, if thou needs must bear the yoke, I wish it
Gentle as freedom " — here she kissed it : then —
" All good go with thee ! take it, Sir," and so
Laid the soft babe in his hard-mailed hands,
Who turned half-round to Psyche as she sprang
To meet it, with an eye that swam in thanks,
Then felt it sound and whole from head to foot,
And hugged and never hugged it close enough,
And in her hunger mouthed and mumbled it,
And hid her bosom with it ; after that
Put on more calm, and added suppliantly :

" We two were friends : I go to mine own land
Forever : find some other : as for me,
I scarce am fit for your great plans : yet speak to me.
Say one soft word, and let me part forgiven."

But Ida spoke not, rapt upon the child.
 Then Arac. "Ida — 'sdeath! you blame the man;
 You wrong yourselves — the woman is so hard
 Upon the woman. Come, a grace to me!
 I am your warrior; I and mine have fought
 Your battle: kiss her; take her hand, she weeps;
 'Sdeath! I would sooner fight thrice o'er than see it."

But Ida spoke not, gazing on the ground;
 And reddening in the furrows of his chin,
 And moved beyond his custom, Gama said:

"I've heard that there is iron in the blood,
 And I believe it. Not one word? Not one?
 Whence drew you this steel temper? not from me,
 Not from your mother, now a saint with saints.
 She said you had a heart — I heard her say it —
 'Our Ida has a heart,' — just ere she died —
 'But see that some one with authority
 Be near her still,' and I — I sought for one —
 All people said she had authority —
 The Lady Blanche: much profit! Not one word;
 No! though your father sues: see how you stand
 Stiff as Lot's wife, and all the good knights maimed,
 I trust that there is no one hurt to death,

For your wild whim: and was it, then, for this,
Was it for this we gave our palace up,
Where we withdrew from summer heats and state,
And had our wine and chess beneath the planes,
And many a pleasant hour with her that's gone,
Ere you were born to vex us? Is it kind?
Speak to her, I say: is this not she of whom,
When first she came, all flushed you said to me,
Now had you got a friend of your own age,
Now could you share your thought; now should men see
Two women faster welded in one love
Than pairs of wedlock; she you walked with, she
You talked with, whole nights long, up in the tower,
Of sine and arc, spheroid and azimuth,
And right ascension, Heaven knows what; and now
A word, but one, one little kindly word,
Not one to spare her: out upon you, flint!
You love nor her, nor me, nor any; nay,
You shame your mother's judgment too. Not one?
You will not? well — no heart have you, or such
As fancies, like the vermin in a nut,
Have fretted all to dust and bitterness!"
So said the small king, moved beyond his wont.

But Ida stood nor spoke, drained of her force

By many a varying influence and so long :
Down through her limbs a drooping languor wept :
Her head a little bent ; and on her mouth
A doubtful smile dwelt like a clouded moon
In a still water : then brake out my sire,
Lifting his grim head from my wounds : " O you,
Woman, whom we thought woman even now,
And were half-fooled to let you tend our son,
Because he might have wished it — but we see
The accomplice of your madness unforgiven,
And think that you might mix his draught with death,
When your skies change again : the rougher hand
Is safer : on to the tents : take up the Prince."

He rose, and while each ear was pricked to attend
A tempest, through the cloud that dimmed her broke
A genial warmth and light once more, and shone
Through glittering drops on her sad friend :

" Come hither,
O Psyche," she cried out, " embrace me, come,
Quick, while I melt ; make reconciliation sure
With one that cannot keep her mind an hour :
Come to the hollow heart they slander so !
Kiss and be friends like children being chid !

I seem no more : *I* want forgiveness too :
 I should have had to do with none but maids,
 That have no links with men. Ah false but dear,
 Dear traitor too much loved, why ? — why ? — Yet see
 Before these kings we embrace you yet once more
 With all forgiveness, all oblivion,
 And trust not love you less.

And now, O Sire,

Grant me your son to nurse, to wait upon him,
 Like mine own brother. For my debt to him,
 This nightmare weight of gratitude, I know it;
 Taunt me no more : yourself and yours shall have
 Free adit ; we will scatter all our maids
 Till happier times, each to her proper hearth ;
 What use to keep them here, now ? grant my prayer.
 Help, father, brother, help ; speak to the king :
 Thaw this male nature to some touch of that
 Which kills me with myself, and drags me down
 From my fixt height to mob me up with all
 The soft and milky rabble of womankind,
 Poor weakling even as they are."

Passionate tears

Followed : the king replied not : Cyril said :
 " Your brother, Lady, — Florian, — ask for him

Of your great head — for he is wounded too —
 That you may tend upon him with the Prince.”
 “Ay so,” said Ida, with a bitter smile,
 “Our laws are broken : let him enter too.”
 Then Violet, she that sang the mournful song
 And had a cousin tumbled on the plain,
 Petitioned too for him. “Ay so,” she said,
 “I stagger in the stream : I cannot keep
 My heart an eddy from the brawling hour :
 We break our laws with ease, but let it be.”
 “Ay so ?” said Blanche : “amazed am I to hear
 Your Highness : but your Highness breaks with ease
 The law your Highness did not make : ’t was I.
 I had been wedded wife, I knew mankind,
 And blocked them out ; but these men came to woo
 Your Highness — verily I think to win.”

So she, and turned askance a wintry eye :
 But Ida, with a voice that like a bell
 Tolled by an earthquake in a trembling tower
 Rang ruin, answered full of grief and scorn :

“Fling our doors wide ! all, all, not one, but all,
 Not only he, but, by my mother’s soul,
 Whatever man lies wounded, friend or foe,

Shall enter, if he will. Let our girls flit
Till the storm die! but had you stood by us,
The roar that breaks the Pharos from his base
Had left us rock. She fain would sting us too,
But shall not. Pass, and mingle with your likes.
We brook no further insult, but are gone."

She turned; the very nape of her white neck
Was rosed with indignation: but the Prince
Her brother came; the king her father charmed
Her wounded soul with words; nor did mine own
Refuse her proffer, lastly gave his hand.

Then us they lifted up, dead weights, and bare
Straight to the doors: to them the doors gave way
Groaning, and in the vestal entry shrieked
The virgin marble under iron heels:
And on they moved and gained the hall, and there
Rested: but great the crush was, and each base,
To left and right, of those tall columns drowned
In silken fluctuation and the swarm
Of female whisperers: at the further end
Was Ida by the throne, the two great cats
Close by her like supporters on a shield
Bow-backed with fear: but in the centre stood

The common men with rolling eyes ; amazed
They glared upon the women, and aghast
The women stared at these, all silent, save
When armor clashed or jingled, while the day,
Descending, struck athwart the hall, and shot
A flying splendor out of brass and steel,
That o'er the statues leaped from head to head,
Now fired an angry Pallas on the helm,
Now set a wrathful Dian's moon on flame,
And now and then an echo started up,
And shuddering fled from room to room, and died
Of fright in far apartments.

Then the voice

Of Ida sounded, issuing ordinance :
And me they bore up the broad stairs and through
The long-laid galleries past a hundred doors
To one deep chamber shut from sound, and due
To languid limbs and sickness ; left me in it ;
And others elsewhere they laid ; and all
That afternoon a sound arose of hoof
And chariot, many a maiden passing home
Till happier times ; but some were left of those
Held sagest, and the great lords out and in,
From those two hosts that lay beside the walls,
Walked at their will, and everything was changed.

Ask me no more: the moon may draw the sea ;
The cloud may stoop from heaven and take the shape,
With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape ;
But, O too fond, when have I answered thee ?
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: what answer should I give?
I love not hollow cheek or faded eye:
Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die!
Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live ;
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: thy fate and mine are sealed:
I strove against the stream and all in vain:
Let the great river take me to the main:
No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield ;
Ask me no more.

VII.

So was their sanctuary violated,
So their fair college turned to hospital;
At first with all confusion: by and bye
Sweet order lived again with other laws:
A kindlier influence reigned; and everywhere
Low voices with the ministering hand
Hung round the sick: the maidens came, they talked,
They sang, they read: till she not fair, began
To gather light, and she that was, became
Her former beauty treble; and to and fro
With books, with flowers, with Angel offices,
Like creatures native unto gracious act,
And in their own clear element, they moved.

But sadness on the soul of Ida fell,
And hatred of her weakness, blent with shame.
Old studies failed: seldom she spoke; but oft
Clomb to the roofs, and gazed alone for hours
On that disastrous leaguer, swarms of men
Darkening her female field: void was her use;

And she as one that climbs a peak to gaze
O'er land and main, and sees a great black cloud
Drag inward from the deeps, a wall of night,
Blot out the slope of sea from verge to shore,
And suck the blinding splendor from the sand,
And quenching lake by lake and tarn by tarn
Expunge the world : so fared she gazing there ;
So blackened all her world in secret, blank
And waste it seemed and vain ; till down she came
And found fair peace once more among the sick.

And twilight dawned ; and morn by morn the lark
Shot up and shrilled in flickering gyres, but I
Lay silent in the muffled cage of life :
And twilight gloomed ; and broader grown the bowers
Drew the great night into themselves, and Heaven
Star after star arose and fell, but I,
Deeper than those weird doubts could reach me, lay
Quite sundered from the moving Universe,
Nor knew what eye was on me nor the hand
That nursed me, more than infants in their sleep.

But Psyche tended Florian : with her oft
Melissa came ; for Blanche had gone, but left
Her child among us, willing she should keep
Court-favor : here and there the small bright head,

A light of healing, glanced about the couch,
Or through the parted silks the tender face
Peeped, shining in upon the wounded man
With blush and smile, a medicine in themselves
To wile the length from languorous hours and draw
The sting from pain; nor seemed it strange that soon
He rose up whole, and those fair charities
Joined at her side: nor stranger seemed that hearts
So gentle, so employed, should close in love,
Than when two dew-drops on the petal shake
To the same sweet air and tremble deeper down,
And slip at once all-fragrant into one

Less prosperously the second suit obtained
At first with Psyche. Not though Blanche had ~~sworn~~
That after that dark night among the fields,
She needs must wed him for her own good name
Not though he built upon the babe restored;
Nor though she liked him, yielded she, but feared
To incense the Head once more; till on a day
When Cyril pleaded, Ida came behind
Seen but of Psyche. On her foot she hung
A moment and she heard, at which her face
A little flushed and she past on; but each
Assumed from thence a half-consent involved
In stillness, plighted troth, and were at peace.

Nor only these : Love in the sacred halls
Held carnival at will, and flying struck
With showers of random sweet on maid and man.
Nor did her father cease to press my claim,
Nor did mine own, now reconciled ; nor yet
Did those twin brothers, risen again and whole ;
Nor Arac, satiate with his victory.

But I lay still, and with me oft she sat :
Then came a change ; for sometimes I would catch
Her hand in wild delirium, gripe it hard,
And fling it like a viper off, and shriek
“ You are not Ida ; ” clasp it once again
And call her Ida, though I knew her not,
And call her sweet, as if in irony,
And call her hard and cold which seemed a truth :
And still she feared that I should lose my mind,
And often she believed that I should die :
Till out of long frustration of her care,
And pensive tendance in the all-weary noons,
And watches in the dead, the dark, when clocks
Throbb'd thunder through the palace floors, or called
On flying Time from all their silver tongues —
And out of memories of her kindlier days,
And sidelong glances at my father's grief,
And at the happy lovers heart in heart —

And out of hauntings of my spoken love,
And lonely listenings to my muttered dream,
And often feeling of the helpless hands,
And wordless broodings on the wasted cheek —
From all a closer interest flourished up
Tenderness touch by touch, and last, to these,
Love, like an Alpine harebell hung with tears
By some cold morning glacier; frail at first
And feeble, all unconscious of itself,
But such as gathered color day by day.

Last I woke sane, but well-nigh close to death
For weakness : it was evening : silent light
Slept on the painted walls, wherein were wrought
Two grand designs ; for on one side arose
The women up in wild revolt, and stormed
At the Oppian law. Titanic shapes, they crammed
The forum, and half-crushed among the rest
A dwarf-like Cato cowered. On the other side
Hortensia spoke against the tax ; behind,
A train of dames : by axe and eagle sat,
With all their foreheads drawn in Roman scowls,
And half the wolf's-milk curdled in their veins,
The fierce triumvirs ; and before them paused
Hortensia, pleading : angry was her face.

I saw the forms : I knew not where I was :
They did but seem as hollow shows ; nor more
Sweet Ida : palm to palm she sat : the dew
Dwelt in her eyes, and softer all her shape
And rounder showed : I moved : I sighed : a touch
Came round my wrist, and tears upon my hand :
Then all for languor and self-pity ran
Mine down my face, and with what life I had,
And like a flower that cannot all unfold,
So drenched it is with tempest, to the sun,
Yet, as it may, turns toward him, I on her
Fixt my faint eyes, and uttered whisperingly :

“ If you be, what I think you, some sweet dream,
I would but ask you to fulfil yourself :
But if you be that Ida whom I knew,
I ask you nothing : only, if a dream,
Sweet dream, be perfect. I shall die to-night.
Stoop down and seem to kiss me ere I die.”

I could no more, but lay like one in trance,
That hears his burial talked of by his friends,
And cannot speak, nor move, nor make one sign,
But lies and dreads his doom. She turned ; she paused .

She stooped ; and out of languor leapt a cry,
Leapt fiery Passion from the brinks of death ;
And I believed that in the living world
My spirit closed with Ida's at the lips ;
Till back I fell, and from mine arms she rose
Glowing all over noble shame ; and all
Her falser self slipt from her like a robe,
And left her woman, lovelier in her mood
Than in her mould that other, when she came
From barren deeps to conquer all with love,
And down the streaming crystal dropt, and she
Far-fleeted by the purple island-sides,
Naked, a double light in air and wave,
To meet her Graces, where they decked her out
For worship without end ; nor end of mine,
Stateliest, for thee ! but mute she glided forth,
Nor glanced behind her, and I sank and slept,
Filled through and through with Love, a happy sleep.

Deep in the night I woke : she, near me, held
A volume of the Poets of her land :
There to herself, all in low tones, she read :

“ Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white ,

Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk ;
Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font :
The fire-fly wakens : waken thou with me.

“ Now droops the milkwhite peacock like a ghost,
And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

“ Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the stars,
And all thy heart lies open unto me.

“ Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves
A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

“ Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,
And slips into the bosom of the lake :
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip
Into my bosom and be lost in me.”

I heard her turn the page , she found a small
Sweet Idyl, and once more, as low, she read :

“ Come down, oh maid, from yonder mountain height
What pleasure lives in height, (the shepherd sang,)
In height and cold, the splendor of the hills ?
But cease to move so near the Heavens, and cease

To glide a sunbeam by the blasted pine,
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire ;
And come, for Love is of the valley, come,
For Love is of the valley, come thou down
And find him ; by the happy threshold, he,
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,
Or red with spirted purple of the vats,
Or foxlike in the vine ; nor cares to walk
With Death and Morning on the Silver Horns,
Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,
Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice,
That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls
To roll the torrent out of dusky doors :
But follow ; let the torrent dance thee down
To find him in the valley ; let the wild
Lean-headed Eagles yelp alone, and leave
The monstrous ledges there to slope, and spill
Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-smoke,
That like a broken purpose waste in air :
So waste not thou ; but come ; for all the vales
Await thee ; azure pillars of the hearth
Arise to thee ; the children call, and I
Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every sound,
Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet ;
Myriads of rivulets hurrying through the lawn,

The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmuring of innumerable bees."

So she low-toned ; while with shut eyes I lay
Listening ; then looked. Pale was the perfect face ;
The bosom with long sighs labored ; and meek
Seemed the full lips, and mild the luminous eyes,
And the voice trembled and the hand. She said
Brokenly, that she knew it, she had failed
In sweet humility ; had failed in all ;
That all her labor was but as a block
Left in the quarry ; but she still were loth,
She still were loth to yield herself to one,
That wholly scorned to help their equal rights
Against the sons of men, and barbarous laws.
She prayed me not to judge their cause from her
That wronged it, sought far less for truth than power
In knowledge : something wild within her breast,
A greater than all knowledge, beat her down.
And she had nursed me there from week to week :
Much had she learnt in little time. In part
It was ill counsel had misled the girl
To vex true hearts : yet was she but a girl —
" Ah fool, and made myself a Queen of farce !
When comes another such ? never, I think,
Till the Sun drop dead from the signs."

Her voice
Choked, and her forehead sank upon her hands,
And her great heart through all the faultful Past
Went sorrowing in a pause I dared not break ;
Till notice of a change in the dark world
Was lispt about the acacias, and a bird
That early woke to feed her little ones
Sent from a dewy breast a cry for light :
She moved, and at her feet the volume fell.

“ Blame not thyself too much,” I said, “ nor blame
Too much the sons of men and barbarous laws ;
These were the rough ways of the world till now.
Henceforth thou hast a helper, me, that know
The woman’s cause is man’s : they rise or sink
Together, dwarfed or godlike, bond or free :
For she that out of Lethe scales with man
The shining steps of Nature, shares with man
His nights, his days, moves with him to one goal,
Stays all the fair young planet in her hands —
If she be small, slight-natured, miserable,
How shall men grow ? but work no more alone !
Our place is much : as far as in us lies
We two will serve them both in aiding her —
Will clear away the parasitic forms
That seem to keep her up, but drag her down —

Will leave her space to burgeon out of all
Within her — let her make herself her own
To give or keep, to live and learn and be
All that not harms distinctive womanhood.
For woman is not undeveloped man,
But diverse : could we make her as the man,
Sweet love were slain : his dearest bond is this
Not like to like, but like in difference :
Yet in the long years liker must they grow ;
The man be more of woman, she of man ;
He gain in sweetness and in moral height,
Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw the world ;
She mental breadth, nor fail in childward care,
Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind ;
Till at the last she set herself to man,
Like perfect music unto noble words ;
And so these twain, upon the skirts of Time,
Sit side by side, full-summed in all their powers,
Dispensing harvest, sowing the To-be,
Self-reverent each and reverencing each,
Distinct in individualities,
But like each other even as those who love.
Then comes the statelier Eden back to men :
Then reign the world's great bridals, chaste and calm
Then springs the crowning race of humankind.
May these things be !”

Sighing she spoke, "I fear
They will not."

"Dear, but let us type them now
In our own lives, and this proud watchword rest
Of equal; seeing either sex alone
Is half itself, and in true marriage lies
Nor equal, nor unequal: each fulfils
Defect in each, and always thought in thought,
Purpose in purpose, will in will, they grow,
The single pure and perfect animal,
The two-celled heart, beating with one full stroke,
Life."

And again sighing she spoke: "A dream
That once was mine! what woman taught you this?"

"Alone," I said, "from earlier than I know,
Immersed in rich foreshadowings of the world,
I loved the woman: he, that doth not, lives
A drowning life, besotted in sweet self,
Or pines in sad experience worse than death,
Or keeps his winged affections clipt with crime:
Yet was there one through whom I loved her, one
Not learned, save in gracious household ways,
Not perfect, nay, but full of tender wants,
No Angel, but a dearer being, all dipt

In Angel instincts, breathing Paradise,
Interpreter between the Gods and men,
Who looked all native to her place, and yet
On tiptoe seemed to touch upon a sphere
Too gross to tread, and all male minds perforce
Swayed to her from their orbits as they moved
And girdled her with music. Happy he
With such a mother ! faith in womankind
Beats with his blood, and trust in all things high
Comes easy to him, and though he trip and fall,
He shall not blind his soul with clay."

" But I,"

Said Ida, tremulously, " so all unlike —
It seems you love to cheat yourself with words :
This mother is your model. I have heard
Of your strange doubts : they well might be : I seem
A mockery to my own self. Never, Prince ;
You cannot love me."

" Nay, but thee," I said,
" From year-long poring on thy pictured eyes,
Ere seen I loved, and loved thee seen, and saw
Thee woman through the crust of iron moods
That masked thee from men's reverence up, and forced
Sweet love on pranks of saucy boyhood : now
Given back to life, to life indeed, through thee,

Indeed I love : the new day comes, the light
Dearer for night, as dearer thou for faults
Lived over : lift thine eyes ; my doubts are dead,
My haunting sense of hollow shows : the change
This truthful change in thee has killed it. Dear,
Look up and let thy nature strike on mine
Like yonder morning on the blind half-world ;
Approach and fear not ; breathe upon my brows ;
In that fine air I tremble, all the past
Melts mist-like into this bright hour, and this
Is morn to more, and all the rich to come
Reels, as the golden Autumn woodland reels
Athwart the smoke of burning weeds. Forgive me
I waste my heart in signs : let be. My bride,
My wife, my life. O we will walk this world,
Yoked in all exercise of noble end,
And so through those dark gates across the wild
That no man knows. Indeed I love thee ; come
Yield thyself up : my hopes and thine are one :
Accomplish thou my manhood and thyself,
Lay thy sweet hands in mine and trust to me.

CONCLUSION.

So closed our tale, of which I give you all
The random scheme as wildly as it rose :
The words are mostly mine : for when we ceased
There came a minute's pause, and Walter said,
"I wish she had not yielded!" then to me,
"What, if you drest it up poetically?"
So prayed the men, the women : I gave assent :
Yet how to bind the scattered scheme of seven
Together in one sheaf? What style could suit?
The men required that I should give throughout
The sort of mock-heroic gigantesque,
With which we bantered little Lilia first :
The women — and perhaps they felt their power
For something in the ballads which they sang,
Or in their silent influence as they sat,
Had ever seemed to wrestle with burlesque,
And drove us, last, to quite a solemn close —
They hated banter, wished for something real,
A gallant fight, a noble princess — why
Not make her true-heroic — true-sublime ?

Or all, they said, as earnest as the close?
Which yet with such a framework scarce could be.
Then rose a little feud betwixt the two,
Betwixt the mockers and the realists:
And I, betwixt them both, to please them both,
And yet to give the story as it rose,
I moved as in a strange diagonal,
And maybe neither pleased myself nor them.

But Lilia pleased me, for she took no part
In our dispute: the sequel of the tale
Had touched her; and she sat, she plucked the grass,
She flung it from her, thinking: last, she fixt
A showery glance upon her aunt, and said,
"You — tell us what we are;" who might have told
For she was crammed with theories out of books,
But that there rose a shout: the gates were closed
At sunset, and the crowd were swarming now,
To take their leave, about the garden rails.

So I and some went out to these: we climbed
The slope to Vivian-place, and turning saw
The happy valleys half in light and half
Far-shadowing from the west, a land of peace:
Gray halls alone among their massive groves;

Trim hamlets ; here and there a rustic tower
Half-lost in belts of hop and breadths of wheat ;
The shimmering glimpses of a stream ; the seas ;
A red sail, or a white ; and far beyond,
Imagined more than seen, the skirts of France.

“ Look there, a garden ! ” said my college friend,
The Tory member's elder son, “ and there !
God bless the narrow sea which keeps her off,
And keeps our Britain, whole within herself,
A nation yet, the rulers and the ruled —
Some sense of duty, something of a faith,
Some reverence for the laws ourselves have made,
Some patient force to change them when we will,
Some civic manhood firm against the crowd —
But yonder, whiff ! there comes a sudden heat,
The gravest citizen seems to lose his head,
The king is scared, the soldier will not fight,
The little boys begin to shoot and stab,
A kingdom topples over with a shriek,
Like an old woman, and down rolls the world
In mock heroics stranger than our own ;
Revolts, republics, revolutions, all
No graver than a schoolboys' barring out ;
Too comic for the solemn things they are,

Too solemn for the comic touches in them,
 Like our wild Princess with as wise a dream
 As some of theirs — God bless the narrow seas!
 I wish they were a whole Atlantic broad."

"Have patience," I replied, "ourselves are full
 Of social wrong; and maybe wildest dreams
 Are but the needful preludes of the truth:
 For me, the genial day, the happy crowd,
 The sport half-science, fill me with a faith.
 This fine old world of ours is but a child
 Yet in the go-cart. Patience! Give it time
 To learn its limbs: there is a hand that guides."

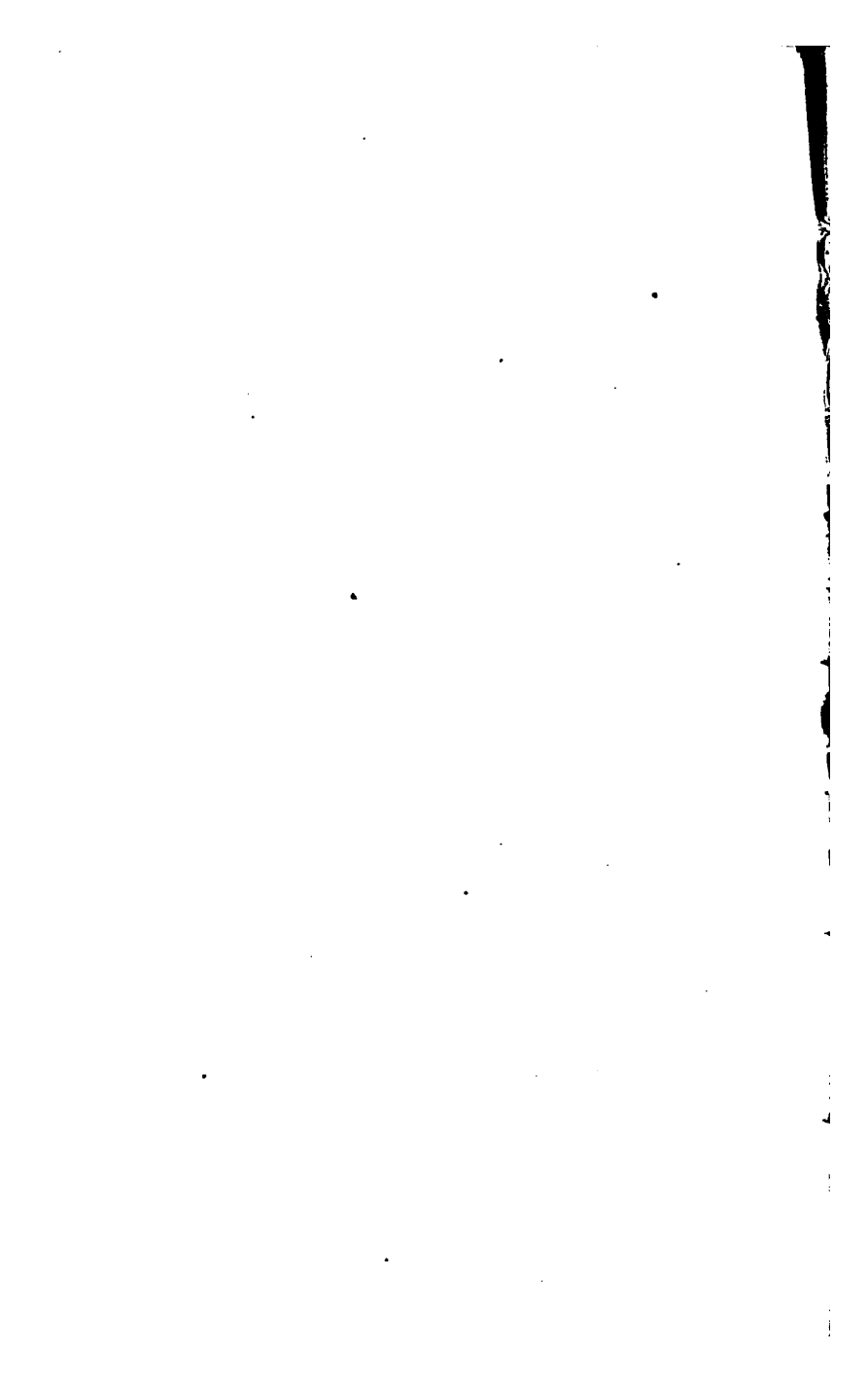
In such discourse we gained the garden rails
 And there we saw Sir Walter where he stood
 Before a tower of crimson holly-oaks,
 Among six boys, head under head, and looked
 No little lily-handed Baronet he,
 A great broad-shouldered genial Englishman
 A lord of fat prize-oxen and of sheep,
 A raiser of huge melons and of pine,
 A patron of some thirty charities,
 A pamphleteer on guano and on grain,
 A quarter sessions chairman, abler none

Fair-haired and redder than a windy morn ;
Now shaking hands with him, now him, of those
That stood the nearest — now addressed to speech —
Who spoke few words and pithy, such as closed
Welcome, farewell, and welcome for the year
To follow : a shout rose again, and made
The long line of the approaching rookery swerve
From the elms, and shook the branches of the deer
From slope to slope through distant ferns, and rang
Beyond the bourn of sunset ; O, a shout
More joyful than the city-roar that hails
Premier or king ! Why should not these great Sirs
Give up their parks some dozen times a year
To let the people breathe ? So thrice they cried,
I likewise, and in groups they streamed away.

But we went back to the Abbey, and sat on,
So much the gathering darkness charmed : we sat
But spoke not, rapt in nameless reverie,
Perchance upon the future man : the walls
Blackened about us, bats wheeled, and owls whooped
And gradually the powers of the night,
That range above the region of the wind,
Deepening the courts of twilight broke them up

Through all the silent spaces of the worlds,
Beyond all thought into the Heaven of Heavens.

Last little Lilia, rising quietly,
Disrobed the glimmering statue of Sir Ralph
From those rich silks, and home well pleased we went.



M A U D.

I.

1.

I HATE the dreadful hollow behind the little
wood,

Its lips in the field above are dabbled with blood-
red heath,

The red-ribb'd ledges drip with a silent horror of
blood,

And Echo there, whatever is ask'd her, answers
'Death.

2

For there in the ghastly pit long since a body was
found,

His who had given me life — O father! O God!
was it we! ? —

Mangled, and flatten'd, and crush'd, and dinted into
the ground :

There yet lies the rock that fell with him when he
fell.

3.

Did he fling himself down ? who knows ? for a great
speculation had fail'd,

And ever he mutter'd and madden'd, and ever
wann'd with despair,

And out he walk'd when the wind like a broken
worldling wail'd,

And the flying gold of the ruin'd woodlands drove
thro' the air.

4.

I remember the time, for the roots of my hair were
stirr'd
By a shuffled step, by a dead weight trail'd, by a
whisper'd fright,
And my pulses closed their gates with a shock on
my heart as I heard
The shrill-edged shriek of a mother divide the
shuddering night.

5.

Villany somewhere! whose? One says, we are
villains all
Not he: his honest fame should at least by me be
maintain'd:
But that old man, now lord of the broad estate and
the Hall,
Dropt off gorged from a scheme that had left us
flaccid and drain'd.

6.

Why do they prate of the blessings of Peace? we
have made them a curse,
Pickpockets, each hand lusting for all that is not its
own;
And lust of gain, in the spirit of Cain, is it better or
worse
Than the heart of the citizen hissing in war on his
own hearthstone?

7.

But these are the days of advance, the works of the
men of mind,
When who but a fool would have faith in a
tradesman's ware or his word?
Is it peace or war? Civil war, as I think, and that
of a kind
The viler, as underhand, not openly bearing the
sword.

8.

Sooner or later I too may passively take the
print

Of the golden age — why not? I have neither hope
nor trust;

May make my heart as a millstone, set my face as
a flint,

Cheat and be cheated, and die: who knows? we are
ashes and dust.

9.

Peace sitting under her olive, and slurring the days
gone by,

When the poor are hovell'd and hustled together,
each sex, like swine,

When only the ledger lives, and when only not all
men lie;

Peace in her vineyard — yes! — but a company
forges the wine.

10.

And the vitriol madness flushes up in the ruffian's
head,
Till the filthy by-lane rings to the yell of the
trampled wife,
While chalk and alum and plaster are sold to
the poor for bread,
And the spirit of murder works in the very means
of life.

11.

And Sleep must lie down arm'd, for the villanous
centre-bits
Grind on the wakeful ear in the hush of the moonless
nights,
While another is cheating the sick of a few last
gasps, as he sits
To pestle a poison'd poison behind his crimson
lights.

12.

When a Mammonite mother kills her babe for a
burial fee,
And Timour-Mammon grins on a pile of children's
bones,
Is it peace or war? better, war! loud war by land
and by sea,
War with a thousand battles, and shaking a hundred
thrones.

13.

For I trust if an enemy's fleet came yonder round
by the hill,
And the rushing battle-bolt sang from the three-
decker out of the foam,
That the smooth-faced snub-nosed rogue would leap
from his counter and till,
And strike, if he could, were it but with his cheating
yard-wand, home.

14.

There are workmen up at the Hall: they are
coming back from abroad,
The dark old place will be gilt by the touch of a
millionnaire:
I have heard, I know not whence, of the singular
beauty of Maud,
I play'd with the girl when a child; she promised
then to be fair.

15.

Maud with her venturous climbings and tumbles
and childish escapes,
Maud the delight of the village, the ringing joy of
the Hall,
Maud with her sweet purse-mouth when my father
dangled the grapes,
Maud the beloved of my mother, the moon-faced
darling of all,—

16.

What is she now? My dreams are bad. She may
bring me a curse.

No, there is fatter game on the moor; she will let
me alone.

Thanks, for the fiend best knows whether woman
or man be the worse.

I will bury myself in my books, and the Devil may
pipe to his own.

II.

LONG have I sigh'd for a calm : God grant I may
find it at last !

It will never be broken by Maud, she has neither
savor nor salt,

But a cold and clear-cut face, as I found when her
carriage past,

Perfectly beautiful : let it be granted her : where is
the fault ?

All that I saw (for her eyes were downcast, not to
be seen)

Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null,

Dead perfection, no more ; nothing more, if it had
not been

For a chance of travel, a paleness, an hour's defect
of the rose,
Or an underlip, you may call it a little too ripe,
too full,
Or the least little delicate aquiline curve in a
sensitive nose,
From which I escaped heart-free, with the least
little touch of spleen.

III.

COLD and clear-cut face, why come you so cruelly
meek,
Breaking a slumber in which all spleenful folly was
drown'd,
Pale with the golden beam of an eyelash dead on
the cheek,
Passionless, pale, cold face, star-sweet on a gloom
profound ;
Womanlike, taking revenge too deep for a transient
wrong
Done but in thought to your beauty, and ever as
pale as before
Growing and fading and growing upon me without
a sound,

Luminous, gemlike, ghostlike, deathlike, half the
night long

Growing and fading and growing, till I could bear
it no more,

But arose, and all by myself in my own dark garden
ground,

Listening now to the tide in its broad-flung ship-
wrecking roar,

Now to the scream of a madden'd beach dragg'd
down by the wave,

Walk'd in a wintry wind by a ghastly glimmer, and
found

The shining daffodil dead, and Orion low in his
grave.

IV.

1.

A MILLION emeralds break from the ruby-budded
lime

In the little grove where I sit—ah, wherefore
cannot I be

Like things of the season gay, like the bountiful
season bland,

When the far-off sail is blown by the breeze of a
softer clime,

Half-lost in the liquid azure bloom of a crescent
of sea,

The silent sapphire-spangled marriage ring of the
land?

2

Below me, there, is the village, and looks how quiet
and small!

And yet bubbles o'er like a city, with gossip, scandal,
and spite;

And Jack on his ale-house bench has as many lies
as a Czar;

And here on the landward side, by a red rock,
glimmers the Hall;

And up in the high Hall-garden I see her pass like
a light;

But sorrow seize me if ever that light be my leading
star!

3.

When have I bow'd to her father, the wrinkled head
of the race?

I met her abroad with her brother, but not to her
brother I bow'd;

I bow'd to his lady-sister as she rode by on the
moor ;

But the fire of a foolish pride flash'd over her
beautiful face.

O child, you wrong your beauty, believe it, in being
so proud ;

Your father has wealth well-gotten, and I am
nameless and poor.

4

I keep but a man and a maid, ever ready to slander
and steal ;

I know it, and smile a hard-set smile, like a stoic, or
like

A wiser epicurean, and let the world have its
way :

For nature is one with rapine, a harm no preacher
can heal ;

The Mayfly is torn by the swallow, the sparrow
spear'd by the shrike,
And the whole little wood where I sit is a world of
plunder and prey.

5

We are puppets, Man in his pride, and Beauty fair
in her flower ;
Do we move ourselves, or are moved by an unseen
hand at a game
That pushes us off from the board, and others ever
succeed ?
Ah yet, we cannot be kind to each other here for an
hour ;
We whisper, and hint, and chuckle, and grin at a
brother's shame ;
However we brave it out, we men are a little
breed.

6.

A monstrous eft was of old the Lord and Master of
Earth,
For him did his high sun flame, and his river
billowing ran,
And he felt himself in his force to be Nature's
crowning race.
As nine months go to the shaping an infant ripe for
his birth,
So many a million of ages have gone to the making
of man :
He now is first, but is he the last ? is he not too
base ?

7.

The man of science himself is fonder of glory, and
vain,
An eye well-practised in nature, a spirit bounded
and poor ;

The passionate heart of the poet is whirl'd into folly
and vice.

I would not marvel at either, but keep a temperate
brain ;

For not to desire or admire, if a man could learn it,
were more

Than to walk all day like the sultan of old in a
garden of spice.

8.

For the drift of the Maker is dark, an Isis hid by
the veil.

Who knows the ways of the world, how God will
bring them about ?

Our planet is one, the suns are many, the world is
wide.

Shall I weep if a Poland fall ? shall I shriek if a
Hungary fail ?

Or an infant civilization be ruled with rod or with
knout ?

I have not made the world, and He that made it
will guide.

9.

Be mine a philosopher's life in the quiet woodland
ways,

Where if I cannot be gay let a passionless peace be
my lot,

Far off from the clamor of liars' belied in the hubbub
of lies ;

From the long-neck'd geese of the world that are
ever hissing dispraise

Because their natures are little, and, whether he
heed it or not,

Where each man walks with his head in a cloud of
poisonous flies.

10.

And most of all would I flee from the cruel madness
of love,

The honey of poison-flowers and all the measureless
ill.

Ah Maud, you milk-white fawn, you are all unmeet
for a wife.

Your mother is mute in her grave as her image in
marble above;

Your father is ever in London, you wander about at
your will;

You have but fed on the roses, and lain in the lilies
of life.

V.

1.

A voice by the cedar tree,
In the meadow under the Hall!
She is singing an air that is known to me,
A passionate ballad gallant and gay,
A martial song like a trumpet's call!
Singing alone in the morning of life,
In the happy morning of life and of May,
Singing of men that in battle array,
Ready in heart and ready in hand,
March with banner and bugle and fife
To the death, for their native land.

2.

Maud with her exquisite face,
And wild voice pealing up to the sunny sky

And feet like sunny gems on an English green,
Maud in the light of her youth and her grace,
Singing of Death, and of Honor that cannot die,
Till I well could weep for a time so sordid and mean,
And myself so languid and base.

2.

Silence, beautiful voice !
Be still, for you only trouble the mind
With a joy in which I cannot rejoice,
A glory I shall not find.
Still ! I will hear you no more,
For your sweetness hardly leaves me a choice
But to move to the meadow and fall before
Her feet on the meadow grass, and adore,
Not her, who is neither courtly nor kind,
Not her, not her, but a voice.

VI

1.

MORNING arises stormy and pale,
No sun, but a wannish glare
In fold upon fold of hueless cloud
And the budded peaks of the wood are bow'd
Caught and cuff'd by the gale :
I had fancied it would be fair.

2

Whom but Maud should I meet
Last night, when the sunset burn'd
On the blossom'd gable-ends
At the head of the village street,

Whom but Maud should I meet ?
And she touch'd my hand with a smile so sweet
She made me divine amends
For a courtesy not return'd.

8.

And thus a delicate spark
Of glowing and growing light
Thro' the livelong hours of the dark
Kept itself warm in the heart of my dreams,
Ready to burst in a color'd flame ;
Till at last when the morning came
In a cloud, it faded, and seems
But an ashen-gray delight.

4.

What if with her sunny hair,
And smile as sunny as cold,
She meant to weave me a snare
Of some coquettish deceit,

Cleopatra-like as of old
To entangle me when we met,
To have her lion roll in a silken net
And fawn at a victor's feet.

5.

Ah, what shall I be at fifty
Should Nature keep me alive,
If I find the world so bitter
When I am but twenty-five?
Yet, if she were not a cheat,
If Maud were all that she seem'd,
And her smile were all that I dream'd,
Then the world were not so bitter
But a smile could make it sweet.

6.

What if tho' her eye seem'd full
Of a kind intent to me,
What if that dandy-despot, he,

That jewell'd mass of millinery,
That oil'd and curl'd Assyrian Bull
Smelling of musk and of insolence,
Her brother, from whom I keep aloof,
Who wants the finer politic sense
To mask, tho' but in his own behoof,
With a glassy smile his brutal scorn —
What if he had told her yester-morn
How prettily for his own sweet sake
A face of tenderness might be feign'd,
And a moist mirage in desert eyes,
That so, when the rotten hustings shake
In another month to his brazen lies,
A wretched vote may be gain'd.

7.

For a raven ever croaks, at my side,
Keep watch and ward, keep watch and ward,
Or thou wilt prove their tool.
Yea too, myself from myself I guard,

For often a man's own angry pride
Is cap and bells for a fool.

8.

Perhaps the smile and tender tone
Came out of her pitying womanhood,
For am I not, am I not, here alone
So many a summer since she died,
My mother, who was so gentle and good?
Living alone in an empty house,
Here half-hid in the gleaming wood,
Where I hear the dead at midday moan,
And the shrieking rush of the wainscot mouse
And my own sad name in corners cried,
When the shiver of dancing leaves is thrown
About its echoing chambers wide,
Till a morbid hate and horror have grown
Of a world in which I have hardly mixt,
And a morbid eating lichen fixt
On a heart half-turn'd to stone.

9.

O heart of stone, are you flesh, and caught
By that you swore to withstand ?
For what was it else within me wrought
But, I fear, the new strong wine of love,
That made my tongue so stammer and trip
When I saw the treasured splendor, her hand,
Come sliding out of her sacred glove,
And the sunlight broke from her lip ?

10.

I have play'd with her when a child ;
She remembers it now we meet.
Ah well, well, well, I may be beguiled
By some coquettish deceit.
Yet, if she were not a cheat,
If Maud were all that she seem'd,
And her smile had all that I dream'd,
Then the world were not so bitter
But a smile could make it sweet.

VII.

1.

Did I hear it half in a doze
Long since, I know not where ?
Did I dream it an hour ago,
When asleep in this arm-chair ?

2.

Men were drinking together,
Drinking and talking of me ;
Well, if it prove a girl, the boy
Will have plenty : so let it be.

3.

Is it an echo of something
Read with a boy's delight,
Viziers nodding together
In some Arabian night ?

4.

Strange, that I hear two men,
Somewhere, talking of me ;
' Well, if it prove a girl, my boy
Will have plenty : so let it be

VIII.

SHE came to the village church
And sat by a pillar alone ;
An angel watching an urn
Wept over her, carved in stone
And once, but once, she lifted her eyes,
And suddenly, sweetly, strangely blush'd
To find they were met by my own ;
And suddenly, sweetly, my heart beat stronger
And thicker, until I heard no longer
The snowy-banded, dilettante,
Delicate-handed priest intone ;
And thought, is it pride, and mused and sigh'd
' No surely, now it cannot be pride.'

IX.

I WAS walking a mile,
More than a mile from the shore,
The sun look'd out with a smile,
Betwixt the cloud and the moor,
And riding at set of day
Over the dark moor land,
Rapidly riding far away,
She waved to me with her hand.
There were two at her side,
Something flash'd in the sun,
Down by the hill I saw them ride,
In a moment they were gone :

Like a sudden spark
Struck vainly in the night,
And back returns the dark
With no more hope of light.

X.

1.

SICK, am I sick of a jealous dread ?
Was not one of the two at her side
This new-made lord, whose splendor plucks
The slavish hat from the villager's head ?
Whose old grandfather has lately died,
Gone to a blacker pit, for whom
Grimy nakedness dragging his trucks
And laying his trams in a poison'd gloom
Wrought, till he crept from a gutted mine
Master of half a servile shire,
And left his coal all turn'd into gold
To a grandson, first of his noble line,

Rich in the grace all women desire,
Strong in the power that all men adore,
And simper and set their voices lower,
And soften as if to a girl, and hold
Awe-stricken breaths at a work divine,
Seeing his gewgaw castue shine,
New as his title, built last year,
There amid perky larches and pine
And over the sullen-purple moor
(Look at it) pricking a cockney ear.

2

What, has he found my jewel out?
For one of the two that rode at her side
Bound for the Hall, I am sure was he:
Bound for the Hall, and I think for a bride.
Blithe would her brother's acceptance be.
Maud could be gracious too, no doubt,
To a lord, a captain, a padded shape,

A bought commission, a waxen face,
A rabbit mouth that is ever agape —
Bought? what is it he cannot buy?
And therefore splenetic, personal, base,
Sick, sick to the heart of life, am I.

3.

Last week came one to the county town,
To preach our poor little army down,
And play the game of the despot kings,
Tho' the state has done it and thrice as well:
This broad-brimm'd hawker of holy things,
Whose ear is stuff with his cotton, and rings
Even in dreams to the chink of his pence,
This huckster put down war! can he tell
Whether war be a cause or a consequence?
Put down the passions that make earth Hell!
Down with ambition, avarice, pride,
Jealousy, down! cut off from the mind

The bitter springs of anger and fear ;
Down too, down at your own fireside,
With the evil tongue and the evil ear,
For each is at war with mankind.

4.

Ah God, for a man with heart, head, hand,
Like some of the simple great ones gone
For ever and ever by,
One still strong man in a blatant land,
Whatever they call him, what care I,
Aristocrat, democrat, autocrat — one
Who can rule and dare not lie.

XI.

1.

O LET the solid ground
Not fail beneath my feet
Before my life has found
What some have found so sweet;
Then let come what come may,
What matter if I go mad,
I shall have had my day.

2.

Let the sweet heavens endure,
Not close and darken above me

Before I am quite quite sure
That there is one to love me ;
Then let come what come may
To a life that has been so sad,
I shall have had my day.

XII.

1.

BIRDS in the high Hall-garden
When twilight was falling,
Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud,
They were crying and calling

2.

Where was Maud ? in our wood ;
And I, who else, was with her,
Gathering woodland lilies,
Myriads blow together.

3.

Birds in our wood sang
Ringing thro' the valleys,
Maud is here, here, here
In among the lilies.

4.

I kiss'd her slender hand,
She took the kiss sedately ;
Maud is not seventeen,
But she is tall and stately.

5.

I to cry out on pride
Who have won her favor !
O Maud were sure of Heaven
If lowliness could save her.

6.

I know the way she went
Home with her maiden posy,
For her feet have touched the meadows
And left the daisies rosy.

7.

Birds in the high Hall-garden
Were crying and calling to her,
Where is Maud, Maud, Maud,
One is come to woo her.

8.

Look, a horse at the door,

And little King Charles is snarling,

Go back, my lord, across the moor,

You are not her darling.

XIII.

1.

SCORN'D, to be scorned by one that I scorn,
Is that a matter to make me fret ?
That a calamity hard to be borne ?
Well, he may live to hate me yet.
Fool that I am to be vext with his pride !
I past him, I was crossing his lands ;
He stood on the path a little aside ;
His face, as I grant, in spite of spite,
Has a broad-blown comeliness, red and white,
And six feet two, as I think, he stands ;
But his essences turn'd the live air sick,
And barbarous opulence jewel-thick
Sunn'd itself on his breast and his hands.

2.

Who shall call me ungentle, unfair,
I long'd so earnestly then and there
To give him the grasp of fellowship;
But while I past he was humming an air,
Stopt, and then with a riding-whip
Leisurely tapping a glossy boot,
And curving a contumelious lip,
Gorgonised me from head to foot
With a stony British stare.

3.

Why sits he here in his father's chair?
That old man never comes to his place:
Shall I believe him ashamed to be seen?
For only once, in the village street,
Last year, I caught a glimpse of his face,
A gray old wolf and a lean.
Scarcely, now, would I call him a cheat;

For then, perhaps, as a child of deceit,
She might by a true descent be untrue;
And Maud is as true as Maud is sweet :
Tho' I fancy her sweetness only due
To the sweeter blood by the other side ;
Her mother has been a thing complete,
However she came to be so allied.
And fair without, faithful within,
Maud to him is nothing akin :
Some peculiar mystic grace
Made her only the child of her mother
And heap'd the whole inherited sin
On that huge scapegoat of the race,
All, all upon the brother.

4.

Peace, angry spirit, and let him be !
Has not his sister smiled on me ?

XIV.

1.

MAUD has a garden of roses
And lilies fair on a lawn ;
There she walks in her state
And tends upon bed and bower
And thither I climb'd at dawn
And stood by her garden-gate ;
A lion ramps at the top, .
He is claspt by a passion-flower.

2.

Maud's own little oak-room
(Which Maud, like a precious stone

Set in the heart of the carven gloom,
Lights with herself, when alone
She sits by her music and books,
And her brother lingers late
With a roystering company) looks
Upon Maud's own garden gate :
And I thought as I stood, if a hand, as white
As ocean-foam in the moon, were laid
On the hasp of the window, and my Delight
Had a sudden desire, like a glorious ghost, to glide
Like a beam of the seventh Heaven, down to my
side,
There were but a step to be made.

8.

The fancy flatter'd my mind,
And again seem'd overbold ;
Now I thought that she cared for me,
Now I thought she was kind
Only because she was cold.

4.

I heard no sound where I stood
But the rivulet on from the lawn
Running down to my own dark wood ;
Or the voice of the long sea-wave as it swell'd
Now and then in the dim-gray dawn ;
But I look'd, and round, all round the house I
 beheld
The death-white curtain drawn ;
Felt a horror over me creep,
Prickle my skin and catch my breath,
Knew that the death-white curtain meant but
 sleep,
Yet I shudder'd and thought like a fool of the sleep
 of death.

XV

So dark a mind within me dwells,
And I make myself such evil cheer,
That if I be dear to some one else,
Then some one else may have much to fear ;
But if I be dear to some one else,
Then I should be to myself more dear.
Shall I not take care of all that I think,
Yea, ev'n of wretched meat and drink,
If I be dear,
If I be dear to some one else

XVI.

1.

THIS lump of earth has left his estate
The lighter by the loss of his weight ;
And so that he find what he went to seek,
And fulsome Pleasure clog him, and drown
His heart in the gross mud-honey of town,
He may stay for a year who has gone for a week ;
But this is the day when I must speak,
And I see my Oread coming down,
O this is the day !
O beautiful creature, what am I
That I dare to look her way ;
Think I may hold dominion sweet,

Lord of the pulse that is lord of her breast,
And dream of her beauty with tender dread,
From the delicate Arab arch of her feet
To the grace that, bright and light as the crest
Of a peacock, sits on her shining head,
And she knows it not: O, if she knew it,
To know her beauty might half undo it.
I know it the one bright thing to save
My yet young life in the wilds of Time,
Perhaps from madness, perhaps from crime,
Perhaps from a selfish grave.

2.

What, if she be fasten'd to this fool lord,
Dare I bid her abide by her word?
Should I love her so well if she
Had given her word to a thing so low?
Shall I love her as well if she
Can break her word were it even for me?
I trust that it is not so.

8.

Catch not my breath, O clamorous heart,
Let not my tongue be a thrall to my eye,
For I must tell her before we part,
I must tell her, or die.

XVII.

Go not, happy day,
 From the shining fields
Go not, happy day,
 Till the maiden yields.
Rosy is the West,
 Rosy is the South,
Roses are her cheeks,
 And a rose her mouth.
When the happy Yes
 Falters from her lips,
Pass and blush the news
 O'er the blowing ships.
Over blowing seas,
 Over seas at rest,

Pass the happy news, .
 Blush it thro' the West ;
Till the red man dance
 By his red cedar tree,
And the red man's babe
 Leap, beyond the sea.
Blush from West to East,
 Blush from East to West,
Till the West is East,
 Blush it thro' the West.
Rosy is the West,
 Rosy is the South,
Roses are her cheeks,
 And a rose her mouth.

XVIII.

1.

I HAVE led her home, my love, my only friend.
There is none like her, none.
And never yet so warmly ran my blood
And sweetly, on and on
Calming itself to the long-wish'd-for end,
Full to the banks, close on the promised good.


2.

None like her, none.
Just now the dry-tongued laurels' pattering talk
Seem'd her light foot along the garden walk.

And shook my heart to think she comes once more ;
But even then I heard her close the door,
The gates of Heaven are closed, and she is gone.

8.

There is none like her, none.
Nor will be when our summers have deceased.
O, art thou sighing for Lebanon
In the long breeze that streams to thy delicious
 East,
Sighing for Lebanon,
Dark cedar, tho' thy limbs have here increased,
Upon a pastoral slope as fair,
And looking to the South, and fed
With honey'd rain and delicate air,
And haunted by the starry head
Of her whose gentle will has changed my fate,
And made my life a perfumed altar-flame ;
And over whom thy darkness must have spread
With such delight as theirs of old, thy great



Forefathers of the thornless garden, there
Shadowing the snow-limb'd Eve from whom she
came.

4.

Here will I lie, while these long branches sway,
And you fair stars that crown a happy day
Go in and out as if at merry play,
Who am no more so all forlorn,
As when it seem'd far better to be born
To labor and the mattock-harden'd hand,
Than nursed at ease and brought to understand
A sad astrology, the boundless plan
That makes you tyrants in your iron skies,
Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,
Cold fires, yet with power to burn and brand
His nothingness into man.

5.

But now shine on, and what care I,
Who in this stormy gulf have found a pearl

The counter-charm of space and hollow sky,
And do accept my madness, and would die
To save from some slight shame one simple girl.

6.

Would die; for sullen-seeming Death may give
More life to Love than is or ever was
In our low world, where yet 't is sweet to live.
Let no one ask me how it came to pass;
It seems that I am happy, that to me
A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,
A purer sapphire melts into the sea.

7.

Not die; but live a life of truest breath,
And teach true life to fight with mortal wrongs.
O, why should Love, like men in drinking-songs,
Spice his fair banquet with the dust of death?
Make answer, Maud my bliss,
Maud made my Maud by that long lover's kiss.

Life of my life, wilt thou not answer this?
'The dusky strand of Death inwoven here
With dear Love's tie, makes Love himself more
dear.'

8.

Is that enchanted moan only the swell
Of the long waves that roll in yonder bay?
And hark the clock within, the silver knell
Of twelve sweet hours that past in bridal white,
And died to live, long as my pulses play;
But now by this my love has closed her sight
And given false death her hand, and stol'n away
To dreamful wastes where footless fancies dwell
Among the fragments of the golden day.
May nothing there her maiden grace affright!
Dear heart, I feel with thee the drowsy spell.
My bride to be, my evermore delight,
My own heart's heart and ownest own, farewell.
It is but for a little space I go:

And ye meanwhile far over moor and fell
Beat to the noiseless music of the night!
Has our whole earth gone nearer to the glow
Of your soft splendors that you look so bright?
I have climb'd nearer out of lonely Hell.
Beat, happy stars, timing with things below,
Beat with my heart more blest than heart can tell
Blest, but for some dark under-current woe
That seems to draw — but it shall not be so
Let all be well, be well.

XIX.

1.

STRANGE, that I felt so gay,
Strange, that I tried to-day
To beguile her melancholy ;
The Sultan, as we name him, —
She did not wish to blame him, —
But he vexed her and perplexed her
With his worldly talk and folly ;
Was it gentle to reprove her
For stealing out of view
From a little lazy lover
Who but claims her as his due ?
Or for chilling his caresses
By the coldness of her manners,

Nay, the plainness of her dresses?
Now I know her but in two,
Nor can pronounce upon it
If one should ask me whether
The habit, hat, and feather,
Or the frock and gypsy bonnet
Be the neater and completer;
For nothing can be sweeter
Than maiden Maud in either.

2.

But to-morrow, if we live,
Our ponderous squire will give
A grand political dinner
To half the squirelings near;
And Maud will wear her jewels,
And the bird of prey will hover,
And the titmouse hope to win her
With his chirrup at her ear.

8.

A grand political dinner
To the men of many acres, .
A gathering of the Tory,
A dinner and then a dance
For the maids and marriage-makers
And every eye but mine will glance
At Maud in all her glory.

4

For I am not invited,
But, with the Sultan's pardon,
I am all as well delighted,
For I know her own rose-garden,
And mean to linger in it
Till the dancing will be over ;
And then, O then, come out to me
For a minute, but for a minute,
Come out to your own true lover,

That your true lover may see
Your glory also, and render
All homage to his own darling,
Queen Maud in all her splendor.

XX.

RIVULET crossing my ground,
And bringing me down from the Hall.
This garden-rose that I found,
Forgetful of Maud and me,
And lost in trouble and moving round
Here at the head of a tinkling fall,
And trying to pass to the sea ;
O Rivulet, born at the Hall,
My Maud has sent it by thee
(If I read her sweet will right)
On a blushing mission to me,
Saying in odor and color, 'Ah, be
Among the roses to-night.'

XXI.

1.

COME into the garden, Maud,
For the black bat, night, has flown,
Come into the garden, Maud,
I am here at the gate alone ;
And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,
And the musk of the roses blown.

2.

For a breeze of morning moves,
And the planet of Love is on high,
Beginning to faint in the light that she loves
On a bed of daffodil sky,
To faint in the light of the sun she loves,
To faint in his light, and to die.

3.

All night have the roses heard
The flute, violin, bassoon ;
All night has the casement jessamine stirr'd
To the dancers dancing in tune ;
Till a silence fell with the waking bird,
And a hush with the setting moon.

4.

I said to the lily, 'There is but one
With whom she has heart to be gay.
When will the dancers leave her alone ?
She is weary of dance and play.'
Now half to the setting moon are gone,
And half to the rising day ;
Low on the sand and loud on the stone
The last wheel echoes away.

5.

I said to the rose, 'The brief night goes
In babble and revel and wine.
O young lord-lover, what sighs are those,
For one that will never be thine?
But mine, but mine,' so I sware to the rose,
'For ever and ever, mine.'

6.

And the soul of the rose went into my blood,
As the music clash'd in the hall;
And long by the garden lake I stood,
For I heard your rivulet fall
From the lake to the meadow and on to the wood
Our wood, that is dearer than all;

7.

From the meadow your walks have left so sweet
That whenever a March-wind sighs

He sets the jewel-print of your feet
In violets blue as your eyes,
To the woody hollows in which we meet
And the valleys of Paradise.

8.

The slender acacia would not shake
One long milk-bloom on the tree ;
The white lake-blossom fell into the lake,
As the pimpernel dozed on the lea ;
But the rose was awake all night for your sake,
Knowing your promise to me ;
The lilies and roses were all awake,
They sigh'd for the dawn and thee.

9.

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,
Come hither, the dances are done,

In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,
Queen lily and rose in one ;
Shine out, little head, sunning over with curls,
To the flowers, and be their sun.

10.

There has fallen a splendid tear
From the passion-flower at the gate.
She is coming, my dove, my dear ;
She is coming, my life, my fate ;
The red rose cries, ' She is near, she is near ;'
And the white rose weeps, ' She is late ;'
The larkspur listens, ' I hear, I hear ;'
And the lily whispers, ' I wait.'

11.

She is coming, my own, my sweet ;
Were it ever so airy a tread,

My heart would hear her and beat,
 Were it earth in an earthy bed ;
My dust would hear her and beat,
 Had I lain for a century dead ;
Would start and tremble under her feet,
 And blossom in purple and red.

XXII.

1.

'THE fault was mine, the fault was mine'—
Why am I sitting here so stunn'd and still,
Plucking the harmless wild-flower on the hill?—
It is this guilty hand!—
And there rises ever a passionate cry
From underneath in the darkening land—
What is it that has been done?
O dawn of Eden bright over earth and sky,
The fires of Hell brake out of thy rising sun,
The fires of Hell and of Hate;
For she, sweet soul, had hardly spoken a word,
When her brother ran in his rage to the gate,

He came with the babe-faced lord ;
Heap'd on her terms of disgrace,
And while she wept, and I strove to be cool,
He fiercely gave me the lie,
Till I with as fierce an anger spoke,
And he struck me, madman, over the face,
Struck me before the languid fool,
Who was gaping and grinning by :
Struck for himself an evil stroke ;
Wrought for his house an irredeemable woe ;
For front to front in an hour we stood,
And a million horrible bellowing echoes broke
From the red-ribb'd hollow behind the wood,
And thunder'd up into Heaven the Christless code,
That must have life for a blow.
Ever and ever afresh they seem'd to grow.
Was it he lay there with a fading eye ?
' The fault was mine,' he whisper'd, ' fly !'
Then glided out of the joyous wood
The ghastly Wraith of one that I know ;

And there rang on a sudden a passionate cry,
A cry for a brother's blood :
It will ring in my heart and my ears, till I die, till
I die.

2

Is it gone ? my pulses beat --
What was it ? a lying trick of the brain ?
Yet I thought I saw her stand,
A shadow there at my feet,
High over the shadowy land.
It is gone ; and the heavens fall in a gentle rain,
When they should burst and drown with deluging
storms
The feeble vassals of wine and anger and lust,
The little hearts that know not how to forgive :
Arise, my God, and strike, for we hold Thee just,
Strike dead the whole weak race of venomous worms,
That sting each other here in the dust ;
We are not worthy to live.

XXIII.

1.

SEE what a lovely shell,
Small and pure as a pearl,
Lying close to my foot,
Frail, but a work divine,
Made so fairily well
With delicate spire and whorl,
How exquisitely minute,
A miracle of design!

2.

What is it? a learned man
ould give it a clumsy name.

Let him name it who can,
The beauty would be the same

8.

The tiny cell is forlorn,
Void of the little living will
That made it stir on the shore.
Did he stand at the diamond door
Of his house in a rainbow frill?
Did he push, when he was uncurl'd,
A golden foot or a fairy horn
Thro' his dim water-world?

4.

Slight, to be crush'd with a tap
Of my finger-nail on the sand,
Small, but a work divine,
Small, but of force to withstand,

Year upon year, the shock
Of cataract seas that snap
The three-decker's oaken spine
Athwart the ledges of rock,
Here on the Breton strand!

5.

Breton, not Briton; here
Like a shipwreck'd man on a coast
Of ancient fable and fear—
Plagued with a flitting to and fro,
A disease, a hard mechanic ghost
That never came from on high
Nor ever arose from below,
But only moves with the moving eye,
Flying along the land and the main—
Why should it look like Maud?
Am I to be overawed
By what I cannot but know
Is a juggle born of the brain?

6.

Back from the Breton coast,
Sick of a nameless fear,
Back to the dark sea-line
Looking, thinking of all I have lost ;
An old song vexes my ear ;
But that of Lamech is mine.

7.

For years, a measureless ill,
For years, for ever, to part —
But she, she would love me still.
And as long, O God, as she
Have a grain of love for me,
So long, no doubt, no doubt,
Shall I nurse in my dark heart
However weary, a spark of will
Not to be trampled out.

8.

Strange, that the mind, when fraught
With a passion so intense
One would think that it well
Might drown all life in the eye, —
That it should, by being so overwrought,
Suddenly strike on a sharper sense
For a shell, or a flower, little things
Which else would have been past by!
And now I remember, I,
When he lay dying there,
I noticed one of his many rings
(For he had many, poor worm) and thought
It his mother's hair.

9.

Who knows if he be dead?
Whether I need have fled?
Am I guilty of blood?

However this may be,
Comfort her, comfort her, all things good,
While I am over the sea !
Let me and my passionate love go by,
But speak to her all things holy and high,
Whatever happen to me !
Me and my harmful love go by ;
But come to her waking, find her asleep,
Powers of the height, Powers of the deep,
And comfort her tho' I die.

XXIV.

1.

O THAT 't were possible
After long grief and pain
To find the arms of my true love
Round me once again!

2

When I was wont to meet her
In the silent woody places
By the home that gave me birth,
We stood tranced in long embraces
Mixt with kisses sweeter, sweeter
Than anything on earth.

8.

A shadow flits before me,
Not thou, but like to thee ;
Ah Christ, that it were possible
For one short hour to see
The souls we loved, that they might tell us
What and where they be.

4.

It leads me forth at evening,
It lightly winds and steals
In a cold white robe before me,
When all my spirit reels
At the shouts, the leagues of lights, .
And the roaring of the wheels.

5.

Half the night I waste in sighs,
Half in dreams I sorrow after

The delight of early skies ;
In a wakeful doze I sorrow
For the hand, the lips, the eyes,
For the meeting of the morrow,
The delight of happy laughter,
The delight of low replies.

6.

'T is a morning pure and sweet,
And a dewy splendor falls
On the little flower that clings
To the turrets and the walls ;
'T is a morning pure and sweet,
And the light and shadow fleet ,
She is walking in the meadow,
And the woodland echo rings ;
In a moment we shall meet ;
She is singing in the meadow,
And the rivulet at her feet

Ripples on in light and shadow
To the ballad that she sings.

7.

Do I hear her sing as of old,
My bird with the shining head,
My own dove with the tender eye ?
But there rings on a sudden a passionate cry,
There is some one dying or dead,
And a sullen thunder is roll'd ;
For a tumult shakes the city,
And I wake, my dream is fled ;
In the shuddering dawn, behold,
Without knowledge, without pity,
By the curtains of my bed
That abiding phantom cold.

8.

Get thee hence, nor come again,
Mix not memory with doubt,

Pass, thou deathlike type of pain,
Pass and cease to move about,
'T is the blot upon the brain
That *will* show itself without.

9.

Then I rise, the eave-drops fall,
And the yellow vapors choke
The great city sounding wide ;
The day comes, a dull red ball
Wrapt in drifts of lurid smoke
On the misty river-tide.

10.

Thro' the hubbub of the market
I steal, a wasted frame,
It crosses here, it crosses there,
Thro' all that crowd confused and loud,

The shadow still the same ;
And on my heavy eyelids
My anguish hangs like shame.

11.

Alas for her that met me,
That heard me softly call,
Came glimmering thro' the laurels
At the quiet evenfall,
In the garden by the turrets
Of the old manorial hall.

12.

Would the happy spirit descend,
From the realms of light and song,
In the chamber or the street,
As she looks among the blest,
Should I fear to greet my friend

Or to say 'forgive the wrong,'
Or to ask her, 'take me, sweet,
To the regions of thy rest' ?

f8.

But the broad light glares and beats,
And the shadow flits and fleets
And will not let me be ;
And I loathe the squares and streets,
And the faces that one meets,
Hearts with no love for me :
Always I long to creep
Into some still cavern deep,
There to weep, and weep, and weep
My whole soul out to thee.

XXV.

1.

DEAD, long dead,
Long dead !
And my heart is a handful of dust,
And the wheels go over my head,
And my bones are shaken with pain,
For into a shallow grave they are thrust,
Only a yard beneath the street,
And the hoofs of the horses beat, beat,
The hoofs of the horses beat,
Beat into my scalp and my brain,
With never an end to the stream of passing feet,
Driving, hurrying, marrying, burying,
Clamor and rumble, and ringing and clatter,

And here beneath it is all as bad,
For I thought the dead had peace, but it is not so;
To have no peace in the grave, is that not sad?
But up and down and to and fro,
Ever about me the dead men go;
And then to hear a dead man chatter
Is enough to drive one mad.

2

Wretchedest age, since Time began
They cannot even bury a man;
And tho' we paid our tithes in the days that are gone,
Not a bell was rung, not a prayer was read;
It is that which makes us loud in the world of the
 dead;
There is none that does his work, not one;
A touch of their office might have sufficed,
But the churchmen fain would kill their church,
As the churches have kill'd their Christ.

8.

See, there is one of us sobbing,
No limit to his distress ;
And another, a lord of all things, praying
To his own great self, as I guess ;
And another, a statesman there, betraying
His party-secret, fool, to the press ;
And yonder a vile physician, blabbing
The case of his patient — all for what ?
To tickle the maggot born in an empty head,
And wheedle a world that loves him not,
For it is but a world of the dead.

4.

Nothing but idiot gabble !
For the prophecy given of old
And then not understood,
Has come to pass as foretold ;
Not let any man think for the public good,

But babble, merely for babble.

For I never whisper'd a private affair

Within the hearing of cat or mouse,

No, not to myself in the closet alone,

But I heard it shouted at once from the top of the
house ;

Everything came to be known :

Who told *him* we were there ?

5.

Not that gray old wolf, for he came not back

From the wilderness, full of wolves, where he used
to lie ;

He has gather'd the bones for his o'ergrown whelp
to crack ;

Crack them now for yourself, and howl, and die.

6.

Prophet, curse me the blabbing lip,

And curse me the British vermin, the rat ;

I know not whether he came in the Hanover ship,
But I know that he lies and listens mute
In an ancient mansion's crannies and holes :
Arsenic, arsenic, sir, would do it,
Except that now we poison our babes, poor souls !
It is all used up for that.

7.

Tell him now : she is standing here at my head ;
Not beautiful now, not even kind ;
He may take her now ; for she never speaks her
mind,
But is ever the one thing silent here.
She is not of us, as I divine ;
She comes from another stiller world of the dead,
Stiller, not fairer than mine.

8.

But I know where a garden grows,
Fairer than aught in the world beside,

All made up of the lily and rose
That blow by night, when the season is good,
To the sound of dancing music and flutes :
It is only flowers, they had no fruits,
And I almost fear they are not roses, but blood ;
For the keeper was one, so full of pride,
He linkt a dead man there to a spectral bride ;
For he, if he had not been a Sultan of brutes,
Would he have that hole in his side ?

9.

But what will the old man say ?
He laid a cruel snare in a pit
To catch a friend of mine one stormy day ;
Yet now I could even weep to think of it ;
For what will the old man say
When he comes to the second corpse in the pit ?

10.

Friend, to be struck by the public foe,

Then to strike him and lay him low,
That were a public merit, far,
Whatever the Quaker holds, from sin,
But the red life spilt for a private blow —
I swear to you, lawful and lawless war
Are scarcely even akin.

11.

O me, why have they not buried me deep enough?
Is it kind to have made me a grave so rough,
Me, that was never a quiet sleeper?
Maybe still I am but half dead;
Then I cannot be wholly dumb;
I will cry to the steps above my head,
And somebody, surely, some kind heart will come
To bury me, bury me
Deeper, ever so little deeper.

XXVI.

1.

My life has crept so long on a broken wing
Thro' cells of madness, haunts of horror and fear,
That I come to be grateful at last for a little
thing:

My mood is changed, for it fell at a time of year
When the face of night is fair on the dewy downs,
And the shining daffodil dies, and the Charioteer
And starry Gemini hang like glorious crowns
Over Orion's grave low down in the west,
That like a silent lightning under the stars
She seem'd to divide in a dream from a band of the
blest,

And spoke of a hope for the world in the coming
wars —

'And in that hope, dear soul, let trouble have rest,
Knowing I tarry for thee,' and pointed to Mars
As he glow'd like a ruddy shield on the Lion's
breast.

2

And it was but a dream, yet it yielded a dear
delight

To have look'd, tho' but in a dream, upon eyes so
fair,

That had been in a weary world my one thing
bright;

And it was but a dream, yet it lighten'd my despair
When I thought that a war would arise in defence
of the right,

That an iron tyranny now should bend or cease,
The glory of manhood stand on his ancient height,
Nor Britain's one sole God be the millionaire :

No more shall commerce be all in all, and Peace
Pipe on her pastoral hillock a languid note,
And watch her harvest ripen, her herd increase,
Nor the cannon-bullet rust on the slothful shore,
And the cobweb woven across the cannon's throat,
Shall shake its threaded tears in the wind no more.

8

And as months ran on and rumor of battle grew,
'It is time, it is time, O passionate heart,' said I
(For I cleaved to a cause that I felt to be pure and
true),
'It is time O passionate heart and morbid eye,
That old hysterical mock-disease should die.'
And I stood on a giant deck and mixed my breath
With a loyal people shouting a battle cry,
Till I saw the dreary phantom arise and fly
Far into the North, and battle, and seas of death.

4.

Let it go or stay, so I wake to the higher aims
Of a land that has lost for a little her lust of gold,
And love of a peace that was full of wrongs and
shames,
Horrible, hateful, monstrous, not to be told ;
And hail once more to the banner of battle
unroll'd !
Tho' many a light shall darken, and many shall
weep
For those that are crush'd in the clash of jarring
claims,
Yet God's just doom shall be wreak'd on a giant
liar ;
And many a darkness into the light shall leap,
And shine in the sudden making of splendid names
And noble thought be freer under the sun,
And the heart of a people beat with one desire ;
For the long long canker of peace is over and done ,

And now by the side of the Black and the Baltic
deep,

And deathful-grinning mouths of the fortress,
flames

The blood-red blossom of war with a heart of fire.

THE BROOK;

AN IDYL.



HERE, by this brook, we parted; I to the East
And he for Italy — too late — too late:
One whom the strong sons of the world despise;
For lucky rhymes to him were scrip and share,
And mellow metres more than cent for cent;
Nor could he understand how money breeds,
Thought it a dead thing; yet himself could make
The thing that is not as the thing that is.
O had he lived! In our school-books we say,
Of those that held their heads above the crowd,
They flourish'd then or then; but life in him

Could scarce be said to flourish, only touch'd
On such a time as goes before the leaf,
When all the wood stands in a mist of green,
And nothing perfect: yet the brook he loved,
For which, in branding summers of Bengal,
Or ev'n the sweet half-English Neilgherry air,
I panted, seems, as I relisten to it,
Prattling the primrose fancies of the boy,
To me that loved him; for "O brook," he says,
"O babbling brook," says Edmund in his rhyme,
"Whence come you?" and the brook, why not?
replies.

I come from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,
Or slip between the ridges,
By twenty thorps, a little town,
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

'Poor lad, he died at Florence, quite worn out,
Travelling to Naples. There is Darnley bridge,
It has more ivy; there the river; and there
Stands Philip's farm where brook and river meet.

I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

'But Philip chatter'd more than brook or bird ;
Old Philip ; all about the fields you caught
His weary daylong chirping, like the dry
High-elbow'd grigs that leap in summer grass.

I wind about, and in and out,
With here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake
Upon me, as I travel,
With many a silvery waterbreak
Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

'O darling Katie Willows, his one child !
A maiden of our century, yet most meek ;
A daughter of our meadows, yet not coarse ;

Straight, but as lissome as a hazel wand ;
Her eyes a bashful azure, and her hair
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell
Divides three-fold to show the fruit within.

‘ Sweet Katie, once I did her a good turn,
Her and her far-off cousin and betrothed,
James Willows, of one name and heart with her.
For here I came, twenty years back — the week
Before I parted with poor Edmund ; crost
By that old bridge which, half in ruins then,
Still makes a hoary eyebrow for the gleam
Beyond it, where the waters marry — crost,
Whistling a random bar of Bonny Doon,
And push’d at Philip’s garden-gate. The gate,
Half-parted from a weak and scolding hinge,
Stuck ; and he clamor’d from a casement, “ run,
To Katie somewhere in the walks below,
“ Run, Katie ! ” Katie never ran : she moved
To meet me, winding under woodbine bowers.

A little flutter'd, with her eyelids down,
Fresh apple-blossom, blushing for a boon.

'What was it?' less of sentiment than sense
Had Katie; not illiterate; neither one
Who dabbling in the fount of fictive tears,
And nursed by mealy-mouth'd philanthropies,
Divorce the Feeling from her mate the Deed.

'She told me. She and James had quarrell'd.

Why?

What cause of quarrel? None, she said, no cause;
James had no cause: but when I prest the cause,
I learnt that James had flickering jealousies
Which anger'd her. Who anger'd James? I said.
But Katie snatch'd her eyes at once from mine,
And sketching with her slender pointed foot
Some figure like a wizard's pentagram
On garden gravel, let my query pass
Unclaim'd, in flushing silence, till I ask'd

If James were coming. "Coming every day,"
She answered, "ever longing to explain,
But evermore her father came across
With some long-winded tale, and broke him short;
And James departed vext with him and her."
How could I help her? "Would I — was it
wrong?"

(Claspt hands and that petitionary grace
Of sweet seventeen subdued me ere she spoke)
"O would I take her father for one hour,
For one half-hour, and let him talk to me!"
And even while she spoke, I saw where James
Made toward us, like a wader in the surf,
Beyond the brook, waist-deep in meadow-sweet.

'O Katie, what I suffer'd for your sake!
For in I went, and call'd old Philip out
To show the farm: full willingly he rose:
He led me thro' the short sweet-smelling lanes
Of his wheat-suburb, babbling as he went.

He praised his land, his horses, his machines ;
He praised his ploughs, his cows, his hogs, his dogs ;
He praised his hens, his geese, his guinea-hens ;
His pigeons, who in session on their roofs
Approved him, bowing at their own deserts :
Then from the plaintive mother's teat he took
Her blind and shuddering puppies, naming each,
And naming those, his friends, for whom they
were :

Then crost the common into Darnley chase
To show Sir Arthur's deer. In copse and fern
Twinkled the innumerable ear and tail.
Then, seated on a serpent-rooted beech,
He pointed out a pasturing colt, and said :
' That was the four-year-old I sold the Squire.'
And there he told a long long-winded tale
Of how the Squire had seen the colt at grass,
And how it was the thing his daughter wish'd,
And how he sent the bailiff to the farm
To learn the price, and what the price he ask'd,

And how the bailiff swore that he was mad,
But he stood firm ; and so the matter hung ;
He gave them line : and five days after that
He met the bailiff at the Golden Fleece,
Who then and there had offer'd something more,
But he stood firm ; and so the matter hung ;
He knew the man ; the colt would fetch its price ;
He gave them line : and how by chance at last
(It might be May or April, he forgot,
The last of April or the first of May)
He found the bailiff riding by the farm,
And, talking from the point, he drew him in,
And there he mellow'd all his heart with ale,
Until they closed a bargain, hand in hand.

‘ Then, while I breathed in sight of haven, he,
Poor fellow, could he help it ? recommenced,
And ran thro’ all the coltish chronicle,
Wild Will, Black Bess, Tantivy, Tallyho,
Reform, White Rose, Bellerophon, the Jilt,

Arbaces, and Phenomenon, and the rest,
Till, not to die a listener, I arose,
And with me Philip, talking still ; and so
We turn'd our foreheads from the falling sun,
And following our own shadows thrice as long
As when they follow'd us from Philip's door,
Arrived, and found the sun of sweet content
Re-risen in Katie's eyes, and all things well.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
I slide by hazel covers ;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
Among my skimming swallows ;
I make the netted sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
In brambly wildernesses ;
I linger by my shingly bars ;
I loiter round my oresses ;

And out again I curve and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

Yes, men may come and go; and these are gone,
All gone. My dearest brother, Edmund, sleeps,
Not by the well-known stream and rustic spire,
But unfamiliar Arno, and the dome
Of Brunelleschi; sleeps in peace: and he,
Poor Philip, of all his lavish waste of words
Remains the lean P. W. on his tomb:
I scraped the lichen from it: Katie walks
By the long wash of Australasian seas
Far off, and holds her head to other stars,
And breathes in converse seasons. All are gone.'

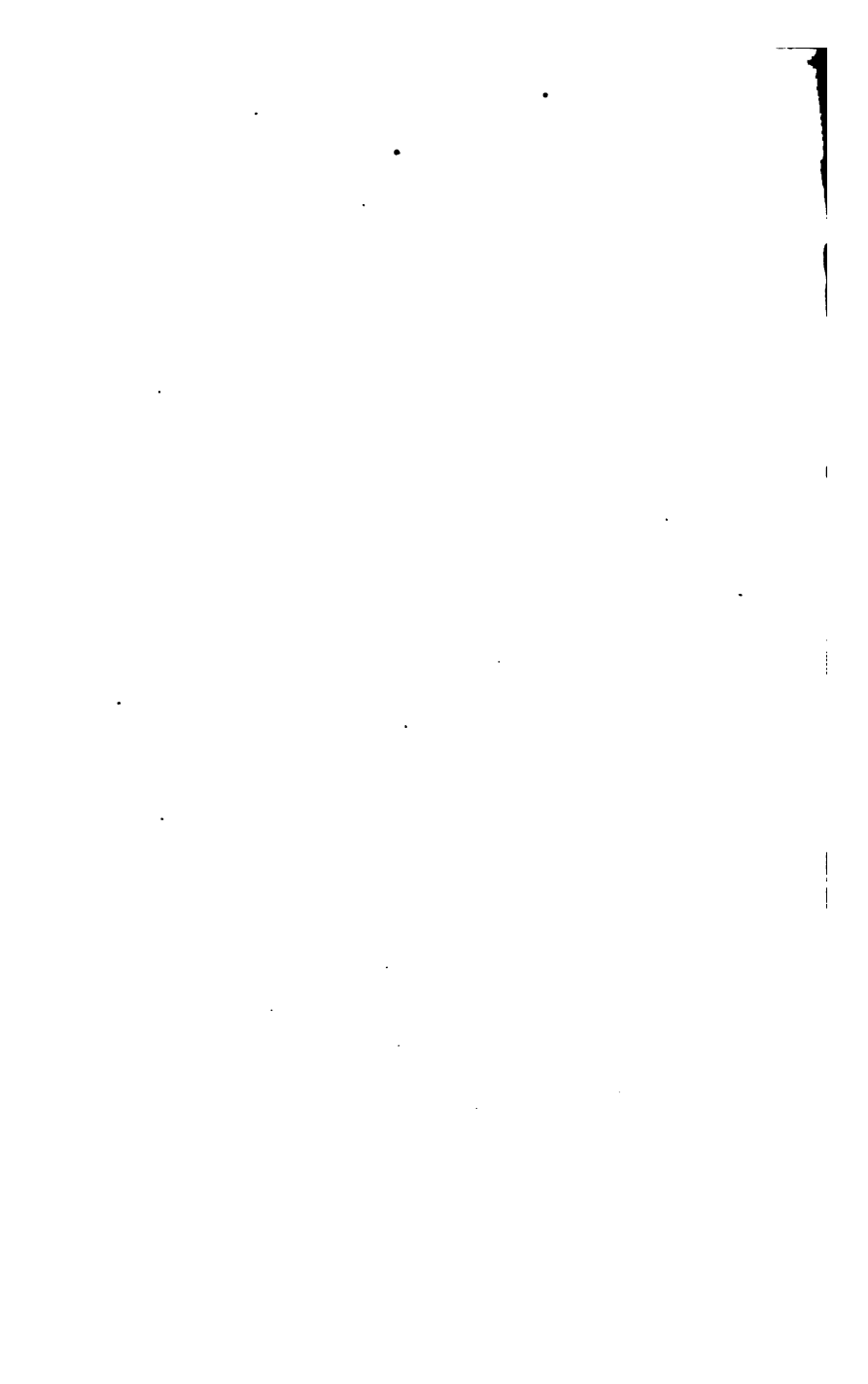
So Lawrence Aylmer, seated on a stile
In the long hedge, and rolling in his mind
Old waifs of rhyme, and bowing o'er the brook
A tonsured head in middle age forlorn,

Mused, and was mute. On a sudden a low breath
Of tender air made tremble in the hedge
The fragile bindweed-bells and briony rings ;
And he look'd up. There stood a maiden near,
Waiting to pass. In much amaze he stared
On eyes a bashful azure, and on hair
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell
Divides three-fold to show the fruit within :
Then, wondering, ask'd her 'Are you from the
farm?' —
'Yes' answer'd she. — 'Pray stay a little : pardon
me ;
What do they call you?' — 'Katie.' — 'That were
strange.
What surname?' — 'Willows.' — 'No!' — 'That is
my name.' —
'Indeed!' and here he look'd so self-perplext,
That Katie laugh'd, and laughing blush'd, till he
Laugh'd also, but as one before he wakes,
Who feels a glimmering strangeness in his dream.

Then looking at her ; — ' Too happy, fresh and fair,
Too fresh and fair in our sad world's best bloom,
To be the ghost of one who bore your name
About these meadows, twenty years ago.'

' Have you not heard ? ' said Katie, ' we came
back.

We bought the farm we tenanted before.
Am I so like her ? so they said on board.
Sir, if you knew her in her English days,
My mother, as it seems you did, the days
That most she loves to talk of, come with me.
My brother James is in the harvest-field :
But she — you will be welcome — O, come in !'



THE LETTERS.



1.

STILL on the tower stood the vane,

A black yew gloom'd the stagnant air,

I peer'd athwart the chancel pane

And saw the altar cold and bare.

A clog of lead was round my feet,

A band of pain across my brow ;

' Cold altar, Heaven and earth shall meet

Before you hear my marriage vow.'

2

I turn'd and humm'd a bitter song
That mock'd the wholesome human heart,
And then we met in wrath and wrong,
We met, but only meant to part.
Full cold my greeting was and dry ;
She faintly smiled, she hardly moved ;
I saw with half-unconscious eye
She wore the colors I approved.

3.

She took the little ivory chest,
With half a sigh she turn'd the key,
Then raised her head with lips comprest,
And gave my letters back to me.
And gave the trinkets and the rings,
My gifts, when gifts of mine could please ;
As looks a father on the things
Of his dead son, I look'd on these.

4.

She told me all her friends had said ;
I raged against the public liar ;
She talk'd as if her love were dead,
But in my words were seeds of fire.
'No more of love ; your sex is known :
I never will be twice deceived.
Henceforth I trust the man alone,
The woman cannot be believed.

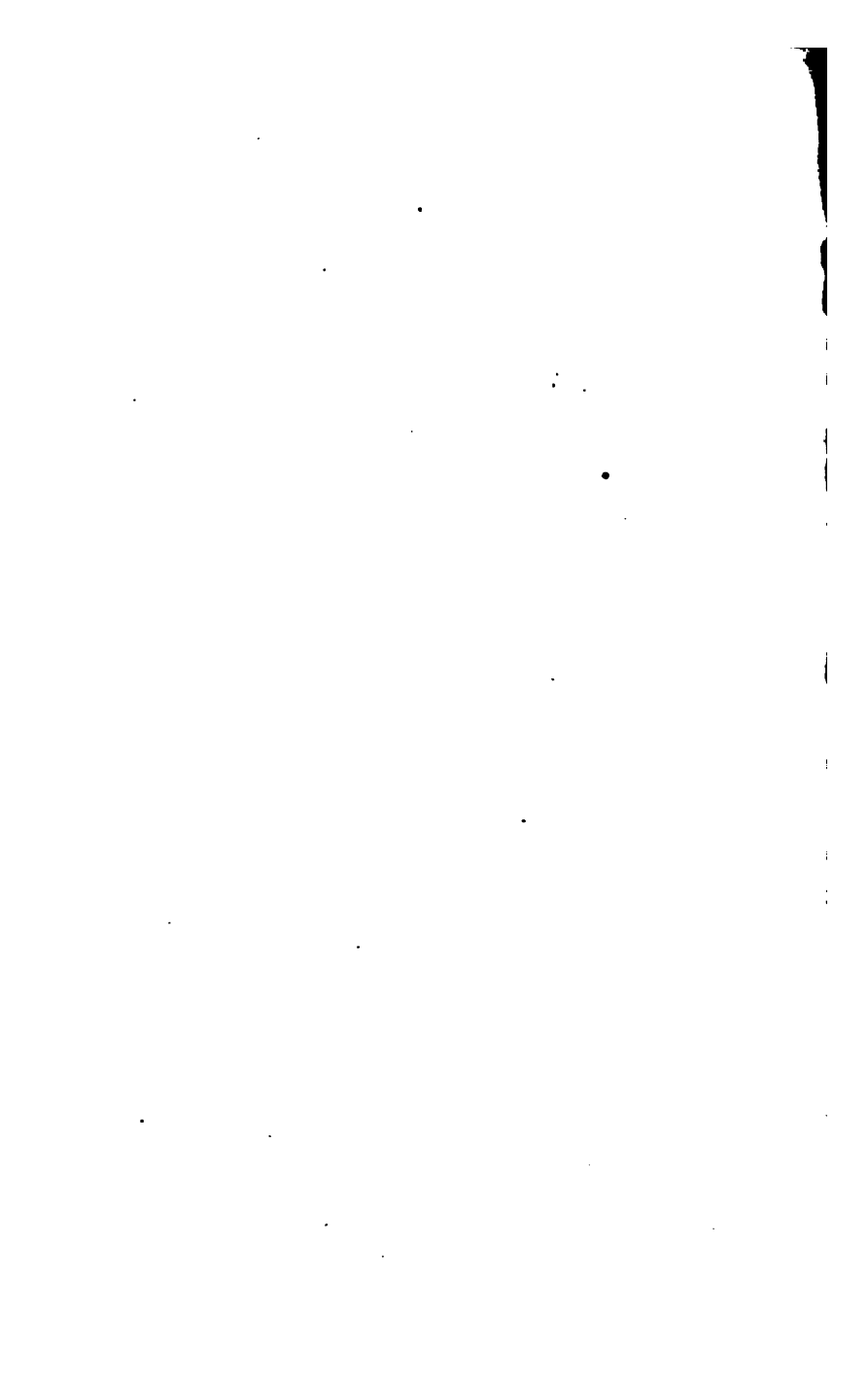
5.

'Thro' slander, meanest spawn of Hell
(And women's slander is the worst),
And you, whom once I loved so well,
Thro' you, my life will be accurst.'
I spoke with heart, and heat and force,
I shook her breast with vague alarms —
Like torrents from a mountain source
We rush'd into each other's arms.

6.

We parted : sweetly gleam'd the stars,
And sweet the vapor-braided blue,
Low breezes fann'd the belfry bars,
As homeward by the church I drew.
The very graves appear'd to smile,
So fresh they rose in shadow'd swells ;
' Dark porch,' I said, ' and silent aisle,
There comes a sound of marriage bells.'

•
ODE ON THE DEATH
OF
THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.



ODE ON THE DEATH
OF
THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.



1.

BURY the Great Duke

With an empire's lamentation,

Let us bury the Great Duke

To the noise of the mourning of a mighty nation,
Mourning when their leaders fall,

Warriors carry the warrior's pall,

And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

2.

Where shall we lay the man whom we deplore ?
Here, in streaming London's central roar.
Let the sound of those he wrought for,
And the feet of those he fought for,
Echo round his bones for evermore.

8.

Lead out the pageant : sad and slow,
As fits an universal woe,
Let the long, long procession go,
And let the sorrowing crowd about it grow,
And let the mournful martial music blow ;
The last great Englishman is low.

4.

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,
Remembering all his greatness in the Past.

No more in soldier fashion will he greet
With lifted hand the gazer in the street.
O friends, our chief state-oracle is mute :
Mourn for the man of long-enduring blood,
The statesman-warrior, moderate, resolute,
Whole in himself, a common good.
Mourn for the man of amplest influence,
Yet clearest of ambitious crime,
Our greatest yet with least pretence,
Great in council and great in war,
Foremost captain of his time,
Rich in saving common-sense,
And, as the greatest only are,
In his simplicity sublime.
O good gray head which all men knew,
O voice from which their omens all men drew,
O iron nerve to true occasion true,
O fall'n at length that tower of strength
Which stood four-square to all the winds that
blew !

Such was he whom we deplore.

The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.

The great World-victor's victor will be seen no
more.

5.

All is over and done :

Render thanks to the Giver,

England, for thy son.

Let the bell be toll'd.

Render thanks to the Giver,

And render him to the mould.

Under the cross of gold

That shines over city and river,

There he shall rest for ever

Among the wise and the bold.

Let the bell be toll'd :

And a reverent people behold

The towering car, the sable steeds :

Bright let it be with his blazon'd deeds.

Dark in its funeral fold.

Let the bell be toll'd :

And a deeper knell in the heart be knoll'd ;

And the sound of the sorrowing anthem roll'd

Thro' the dome of the golden cross ;

And the volleying cannon thunder his loss ;

He knew their voices of old.

For many a time in many a clime .

His captain's-ear has heard them boom

Bellowing victory, bellowing doom ;

When he with those deep voices wrought,

Guarding realms and kings from shame ;

With those deep voices our dead captain taught

The tyrant, and asserts his claim

In that dread sound to the great name,

Which he has worn so pure of blame,

In praise and in dispraise the same,

A man of well-attemper'd frame.

O civic muse, to such a name,

To such a name for ages long,

To such a name,
Preserve a broad approach of fame,
And ever-ringing avenues of song.

6.

Who is he that cometh like an honor'd guest,
With banner and with music, with soldier and with
priest,
With a nation weeping, and breaking on my rest ?
Mighty seaman, this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea.
Thine island loves thee well, thou famous man,
The greatest sailor since our world began.
Now, to the roll of muffled drums,
To thee the greatest soldier comes ;
For this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea ;
His foes were thine ; he kept us free ;
O give him welcome, this is he,

Worthy of our gorgeous rites,
And worthy to be laid by thee ;
For this is England's greatest son,
He that gain'd a hundred fights,
Nor ever lost an English gun ;
This is he that far away
Against the myriads of Assaye
Clash'd with his fiery few and won ;
And underneath another sun,
Warring on a later day,
Round affrighted Lisbon drew
The treble works, the vast designs
Of his labor'd rampart-lines,
Where he greatly stood at bay,
Whence he issued forth anew,
And ever great and greater grew.
Beating from the wasted vines
Back to France her banded swarms,
Back to France with countless blows,
Till o'er the hills her eagles flew

Past the Pyrenean pines,
Follow'd up in valley and glen
With blare of bugle, clamor of men,
Roll of cannon and clash of arms,
And England pouring on her foes.
Such a war had such a close.
Again their ravening eagle rose
In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadowing wings,
And barking for the thrones of kings ;
Till one that sought but Duty's iron crown
On that loud sabbath shook the spoiler down ;
A day of onsets of despair !
Dash'd on every rocky square
Their surging charges foam'd themselves away ;
Last, the Prussian trumpet blew ;
Through the long-tormented air
Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant ray,
And down we swept and charged and overthrew.
So great a soldier taught us there,
What long-enduring hearts could do

In that world's earthquake, Waterloo!
Mighty seaman, tender and true,
And pure as he from taint of craven guile,
O saviour of the silver-coasted isle,
O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,
If aught of things that here befall
Touch a spirit among things divine,
If love of country move thee there at all,
Be glad, because his bones are laid by thine
And thro' the centuries let a people's voice
In full acclaim,
A people's voice,
The proof and echo of all human fame,
A people's voice, when they rejoice
At civic revel and pomp and game,
Attest their great commander's claim
With honor, honor, honor, honor to him,
Eternal honor to his name.

7.

A people's voice ! we are a people yet.
Tho' all men else their nobler dreams forget
Confused by brainless mobs and lawless Powers ;
Thank Him who isled us here, and roughly set
His Saxon in blown seas and storming showers,
We have a voice with which to pay the debt
Of boundless love and reverence and regret
To those great men who fought, and kept it ours
And keep it ours, O God, from brute control ;
O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye, the soul
Of Europe, keep our noble England whole,
And save the one true seed of freedom sown
Betwixt a people and their ancient throne,
That sober freedom out of which there springs
Our loyal passion for our temperate kings ;
For, saving that, ye help to save mankind
Till public wrong be crumbled into dust,
And drill the raw world for the march of mind,

Till crowds at length be sane and crowns be just.
But wink no more in slothful overtrust.
Remember him who led your hosts ;
He bade you guard the sacred coasts.
Your cannons moulder on the seaward wall ;
His voice is silent in your council-hall
For ever ; and whatever tempests lower
For ever silent ; even if they broke
In thunder, silent ; yet remember all
He spoke among you, and the Man who spoke ;
Who never sold the truth, to serve the hour,
Nor palter'd with Eternal God for power ;
Who let the turbid streams of rumor flow
Thro' either babbling world of high and low ;
Whose life was work, whose language rife
With rugged maxims hewn from life ;
Who never spoke against a foe ;
Whose eighty winters freeze with one rebuke
All great self-seekers trampling on the right :
Truth-teller was our England's Alfred named ;

Truth-lover was our English Duke ;
Whatever record leap to light
He never shall be shamed.

8.

Lo, the leader in these glorious wars
Now to glorious burial slowly borne,
Follow'd by the brave of other lands,
He, on whom from both her open hands
Lavish Honor shower'd all her stars,
And affluent Fortune emptied all her horn.
Yea, let all good things await
Him who cares not to be great,
But as he saves or serves the state.
Not once or twice in our rough island-story,
The path of duty was the way to glory :
He that walks it, only thirsting
For the right, and learns to deaden
Love of self, before his journey closes,

He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting
Into glossy purples, which outredden
All voluptuous garden-roses.
Not once or twice in our fair island story,
The path of duty was the way to glory :
He, that ever following her commands,
On with toil of heart and knees and hands,
Thro' the long gorge to the far light has won
His path upward, and prevail'd,
Shall find the toppling crags of Duty scaled
Are close upon the shining table-lands
To which our God Himself is moon and sun.
Such was he : his work is done :
But while the races of mankind endure,
Let his great example stand
Colossal, seen of every land,
And keep the soldier firm, the statesman pure ;
Till in all lands and thro' all human story
The path of duty be the way to glory :
And let the land whose hearths he saved from shame

For many and many an age proclaim
At civic revel and pomp and game,
And when the long-illuminated cities flame,
Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,
With honor, honor, honor, honor to him,
Eternal honor to his name.

9.

Peace, his triumph will be sung
By some yet unmoulded tongue
Far on in summers that we shall not see :
Peace, it is a day of pain
For one about whose patriarchal knee
Late the little children clung :
O peace, it is a day of pain
For one, upon whose hand and heart and brain
Once the weight and fate of Europe hung.
Ours the pain, be his the gain !
More than is of man's degree

Must be with us, watching here
At this, our great solemnity.
Whom we see not we revere.
We revere, and we refrain
From talk of battles loud and vain,
And brawling memories all too free
For such a wise humility
As befits a solemn fane :
We revere, and while we hear
The tides of Music's golden sea
Setting toward eternity,
Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,
Until we doubt not that for one so true
There must be other nobler work to do
Than when he fought at Waterloo,
And Victor he must ever be,
For tho' the Giant Ages heave the hill
And break the shore, and evermore
Make and break, and work their will ;
Tho' worlds on worlds in myriad myriads roll

Round us, each with different powers,
And other forms of life than ours,
What know we greater than the soul ?
On God and Godlike men we build our trust.
Hush, the Dead March wails in the people's ears :
The dark crowd moves, and there are sobs and tears
The black earth yawns : the mortal disappears ;
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust ;
He is gone who seem'd so great. —
Gone ; but nothing can bereave him
Of the force he made his own
Being here, and we believe him
Something far advanced in State,
And that he wears a truer crown
Than any wreath that man can weave him
But speak no more of his renown,
Lay your earthly fancies down,
And in the vast cathedral leave him.
God accept him, Christ receive him.

THE DAISY.

WRITTEN AT EDINBURGH.

O LOVE, what hours were thine and mine,
In lands of palm and southern pine ;
 In lands of palm , of orange-blossom,
Of olive, aloe, and maize and vine.

What Roman strength Turbìa 'show'd
In ruin, by the mountain road ;
 How like a gem, beneath the city
Of little Monaco, basking, glow'd.

How richly down the rocky dell
The torrent vineyard streaming fell
 To meet the sun and sunny waters,
That only heaved with a summer swell.

What slender campanili grew
By bays, the peacock's neck in hue ;
 Where, here and there, on sandy beaches
A milky-bell'd amaryllis blew.

How young Columbus seem'd to rove,
Yet present in his natal grove,
 Now watching high on mountain cornice,
And steering, now, from a purple cove,

Now pacing mute by ocean's rim ;
Till, in a narrow street and dim,
 I stay'd the wheels at Cogoletto,
And drank and loyally drank to him.

Nor knew we well what pleased us most,
Not the clipt palm of which they boast ;
 But distant color, happy hamlet,
A moulder'd citadel on the coast,

Or tower, or high hill-convent, seen
A light amid its olives green ;
 Or olive-hoary cape in ocean ;
Or rosy blossom in hot ravine,

Where oleanders flush'd the bed
Of silent torrents, gravel-spread ;
 And, crossing, oft we saw the glisten
Of ice, far off on a mountain head.

We loved that hall, tho' white and cold,
Those niched shapes of noble mould,
 A princely people's awful princes,
The grave, severe Genovese of old.

At Florence too what golden hours,
In those long galleries, were ours ;
 What drives about the fresh Cascinè,
Or walks in Boboli's ducal bowers.

In bright vignettes, and each complete,
Of tower or duomo, sunny-sweet,
 Or palace, how the city glitter'd,
Thro' cypress avenues, at our feet.

But when we crest the Lombard plain
Remember what a plague of rain
 Of rain-at Reggio, at Parma ;
At Lodi, rain, Piacenza, rain

And stern and sad (so rare the smiles
Of sunlight) look'd the Lombard piles ;
 Porch-pillars on the lion resting,
And sombre, old, colonnaded aisles.

O Milan, O the chanting quires,
The giant windows' blazon'd fires,
 The height, the space, the gloom, the glory!
A mount of marble, a hundred spires!

I climb'd the roofs at break of day;
Sun-smitten Alps before me lay.
 I stood among the silent statues,
And statued pinnacles, mute as they.

How faintly-flush'd, how phantom-fair,
Was Monte Rosa, hanging there
 A thousand shadowy-pencill'd valleys
And snowy dells in a golden air.

Remember how we came at last
To Como; shower and storm and blast
 Had blown the lake beyond his limit,
And all was flooded; and how we past

From Como, when the light was gray,
And in my head, for half the day,
 The rich Virgilian rustic measure
Of Lari Maxume, all the way,

Like ballad-burthen music, kept,
As on The Lariano crept
 To that fair port below the castle
Of Queen Theodolind, where we slept;

Or hardly slept, but watch'd awake
A cypress in the moonlight shake,
 The moonlight touching o'er a terrace
One tall Agavè above the lake.

What more? we took our last adieu,
And up the snowy Splugen drew,
 But ere we reach'd the highest summit
I pluck'd a daisy, I gavè it you.

It told of England then to me,
And now it tells of Italy.

O love, we two shall go no longer
To lands of summer beyond the sea ;

So dear a life your arms enfold
Whose crying is a cry for gold :

Yet here to-night in this dark city,
When ill and weary, alone and cold,

I found, tho' crush'd to hard and dry,
This nursling of another sky

Still in the little book you lent me,
And where you tenderly laid it by :

And I forgot the clouded Forth,
The gloom that saddens Heaven and Earth,
The bitter east, the misty summer
And gray metropolis of the North.

Perchance, to lull the throbs of pain,
Perchance, to charm a vacant brain,
Perchance, to dream you still beside me,
My fancy fled to the South again.

TO THE REV. F. D. MAURICE.

COME, when no graver cares employ,
Godfather, come and see your boy ·
Your presence will be sun in winter
Making the little one leap for joy.

For, being of that honest few,
Who give the Fiend himself his due,
Should eighty-thousand college-councils
Thunder 'Anathema,' friend, at you ;

Should all our churchmen foam in spite
At you, so careful of the right,

Yet one lay-hearth would give you welcome
: (Take it and come) to the Isle of Wight;

Where, far from noise and smoke of town,
I watch the twilight falling brown

All round a careless-order'd garden
Close to the ridge of a noble down.

You 'll have no scandal while you dine
But honest talk and wholesome wine,

And only hear the magpie gossip
Garrulous under a roof of pine :

For groves of pine on either hand,
To break the blast of winter, stand ;

And further on, the hoary Channel
Tumbles a breaker on chalk and sand ;

Where, if below the milky steep
Some ship of battle slowly creep,
And on thro' zones of light and shadow
Glimmer away to the lonely deep,

We might discuss the Northern sin
Which made a selfish war begin ;
Dispute the claims, arrange the chances ;
Emperor, Ottoman, which shall win :

Or whether war's avenging rod
Shall lash all Europe into blood ;
Till you should turn to dearer matters,
Dear to the man that is dear to God ;

How best to help the slender store,
How mend the dwellings, of the poor ;
How gain in life, as life advances,
Valor and charity more and more.

•
Come, Maurice, come : the lawn as yet
Is hoar with rime, or spongy-wet ;

But when the wreath of March has blossom'd,
Crocus, anemone, violet,

Or later, pay one visit here,
For those are few we hold as dear ;

Nor pay but one, but come for many,
Many and many a happy year.

January, 1854.

W I L L .

1.

O WELL for him whose will is strong !
He suffers, but he will not suffer long ;
He suffers, but he cannot suffer wrong :
For him nor moves the loud world's random mock,
Nor all Calamity's hugest waves confound,
Who seems a promontory of rock,
That, compass'd round with turbulent sound,
In middle ocean meets the surging shock,
Tempest-buffeted, citadel-crown'd.

2.

But ill for him who, bettering not with time,
Corrupts the strength of heaven-descended Will,

And ever weaker grows thro' acted crime
Or seeming-genial venial fault,
Recurring and suggesting still !
He seems as one whose footsteps halt,
Toiling in immeasurable sand,
And o'er a weary sultry land,
Far beneath a blazing vault,
Sown in a wrinkle of the monstrous hill,
The city sparkles like a grain of salt.

THE
CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE.

—◆—
1.

HALF a league, half a league,

Half a league onward,

All in the valley of Death

Rode the six hundred.

“Charge,” was the captain’s cry ;

Theirs not to reason why,

Theirs not to make reply,

Theirs but to do and die,

Into the valley of Death

Rode the six hundred.

(445)

2.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
 Volley'd and thunder'd ;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well ,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell,
 Rode the six hundred.

3.

Flash'd all their sabres bare,
Flash'd all at once in air,
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
 All the world wonder'd :
Plunged in the battery smoke,

Fiercely the line they broke ;
Strong was the sabre-stroke :
Making an army reel
 Shaken and sunder'd.
Then they rode back, but not.
 Not the six hundred.

4.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
 Volley'd and thunder'd ;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
They that had struck so well
Rode thro' the jaws of Death,
Half a league back again,
Up from the mouth of Hell,
All that was left of them,
 Left of six hundred.

5

Honor the brave and bold !
Long shall the tale be told,
Yea, when our babes are old --
How they rode onward.





1870

1871

1872

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